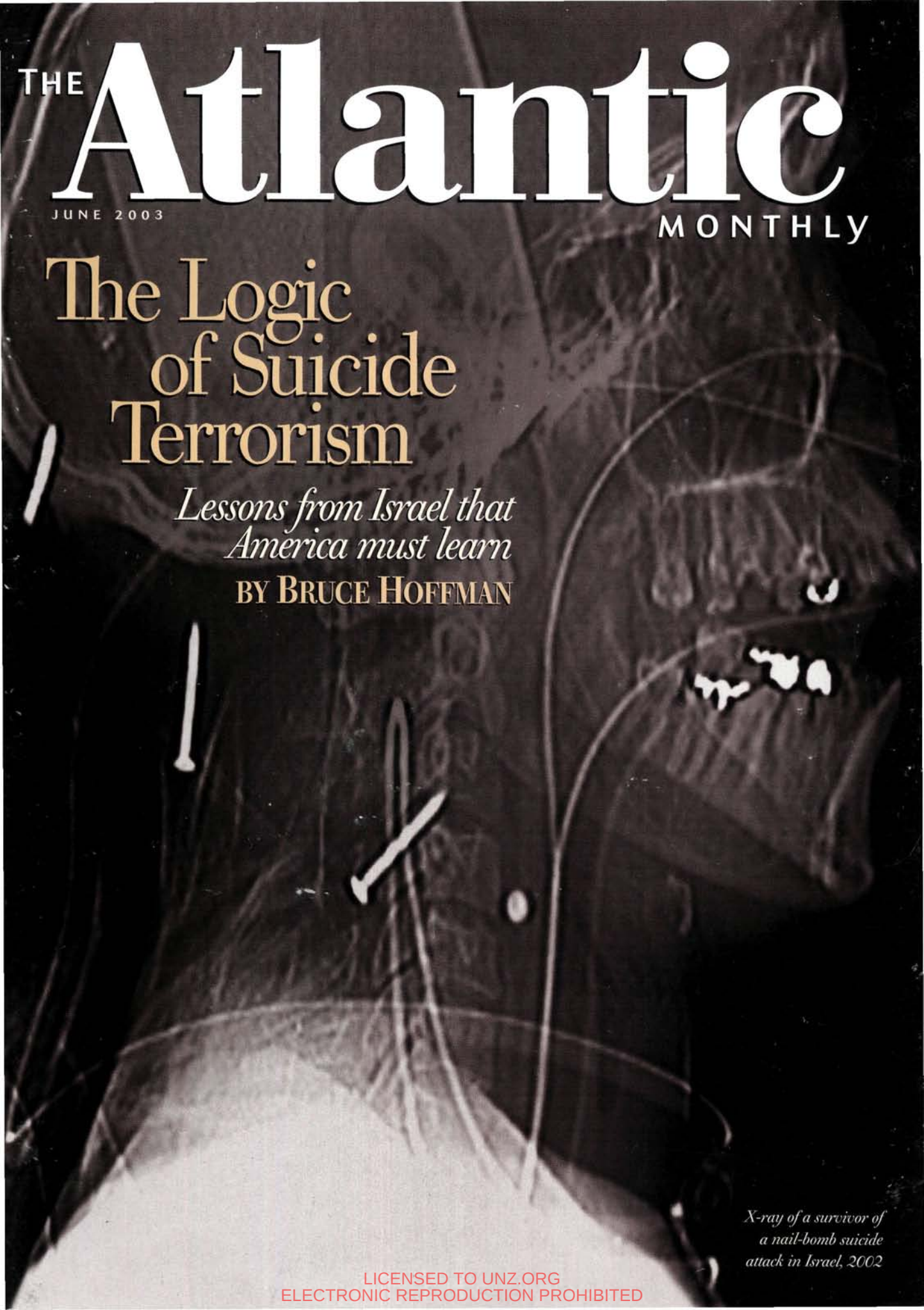




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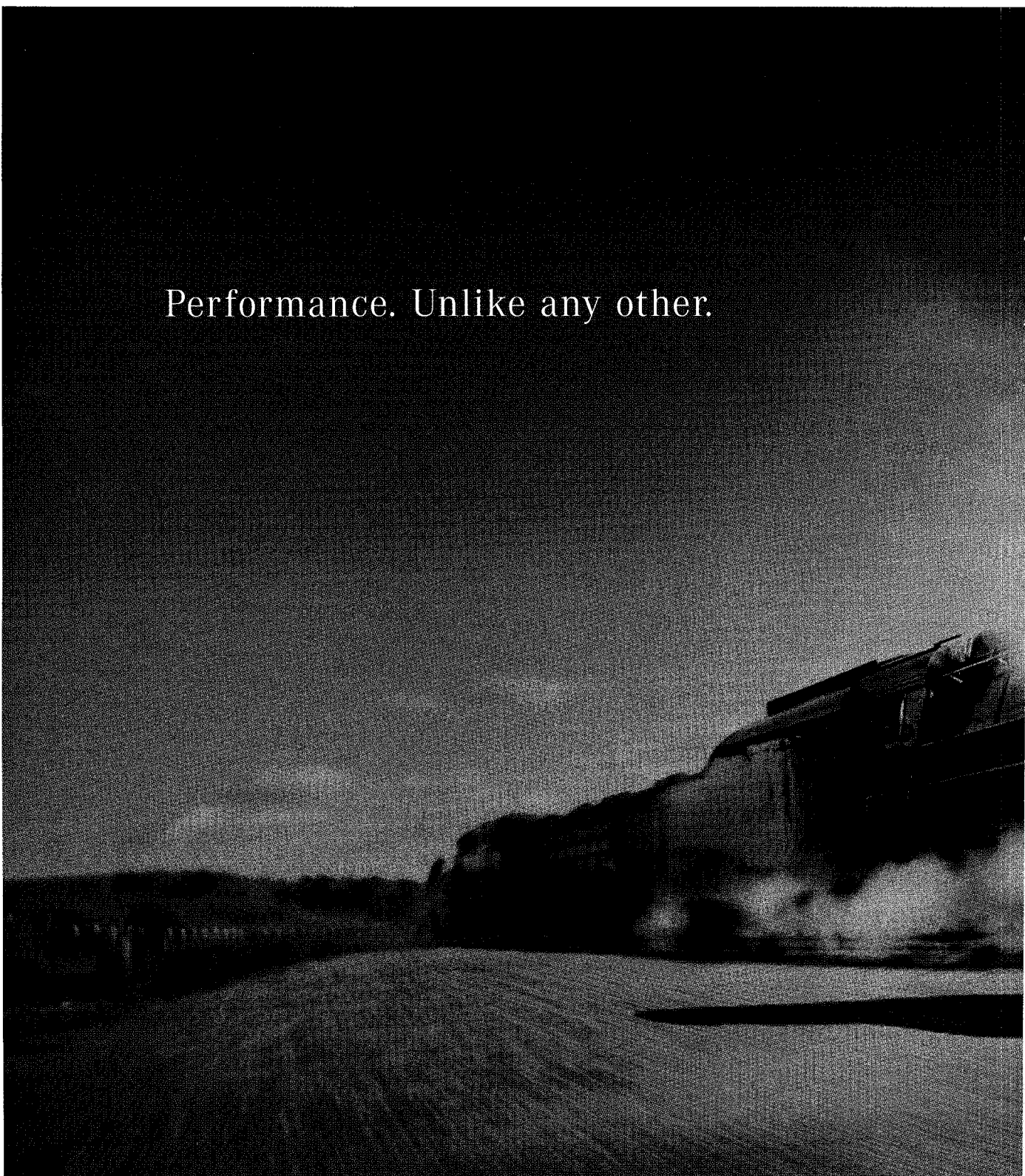
JUNE 2003 MONTHLY

The Logic of Suicide Terrorism

*Lessons from Israel that
America must learn*

BY BRUCE HOFFMAN

*X-ray of a survivor of
a nail-bomb suicide
attack in Israel, 2002*

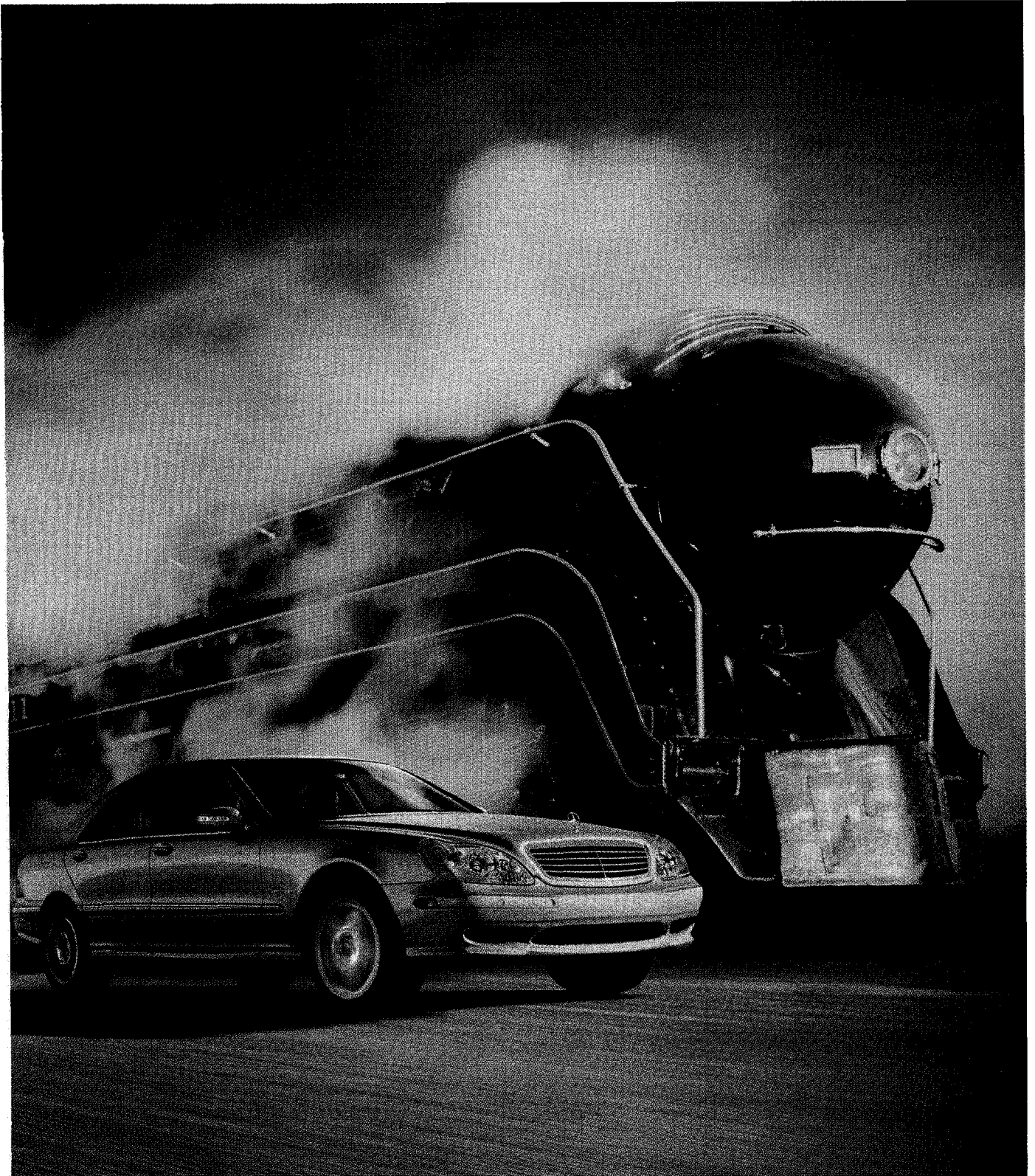


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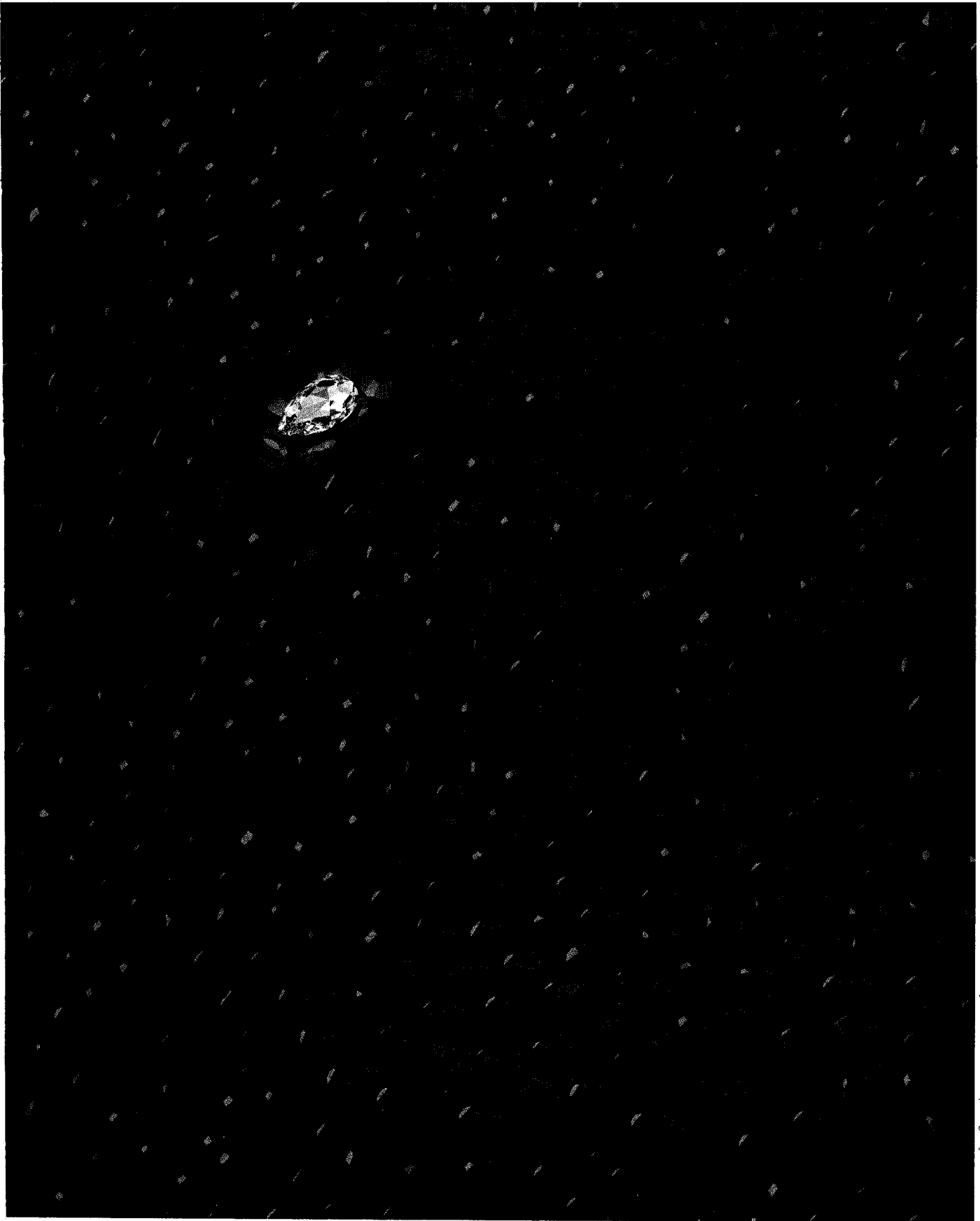


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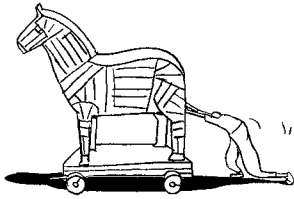


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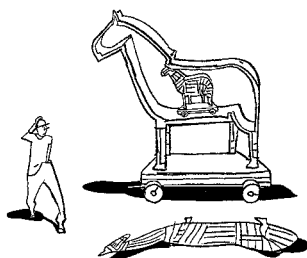
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*Cover: X-ray courtesy of the Department of Radiology and the Trauma Unit, The Hillel Yaffe Medical Center, Hadera, Israel.
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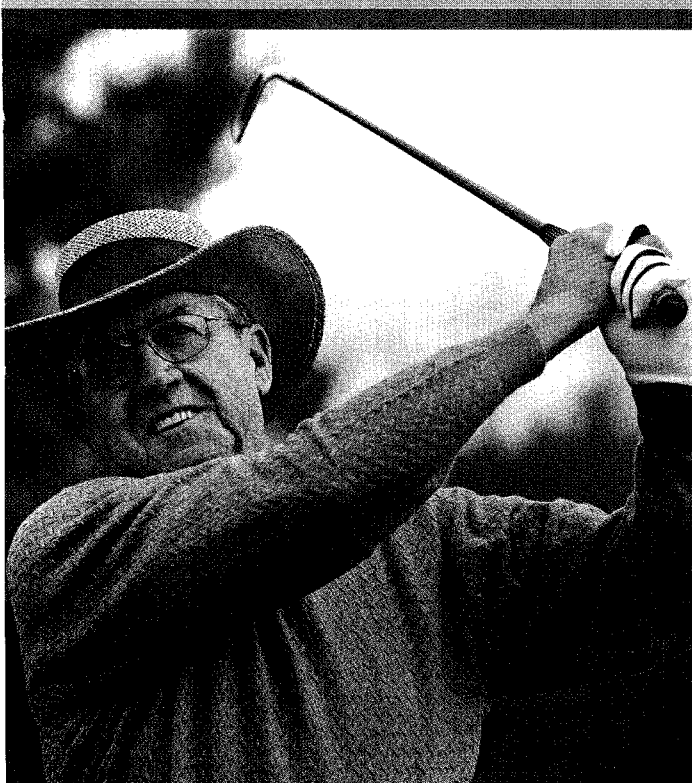
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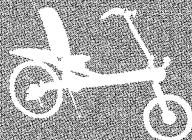
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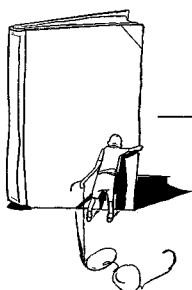
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77 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET

Michael Kelly, the editor at large of *The Atlantic Monthly* and for three years its editor in chief, was killed on the outskirts of Baghdad while covering the Iraq war as a correspondent for this magazine. Attached to the Third Infantry Division, Mike was riding in a communications Humvee in the early-morning hours of April 4 when the vehicle came under enemy fire. It swerved off an embankment and into a canal, killing him and an American serviceman, Staff Sergeant Wilbert Davis. Mike was forty-six.

It is sometimes said that as people age they become more like themselves. It is hard to conceive how Michael Kelly could have become any more like himself than he already was, or how he could ever have been any less. One imagines him bursting into life with his main character traits fully formed: the love of family, the wicked but also jolly and self-deprecating sense of humor, the intellectual energy, the devotion to friendship, the instinctive generosity, the eagerness to embrace life's basic pleasures, the loyalty to core beliefs, the forgetfulness verging on oblivion about the small, practical details of life. His wallets and cell phones litter three continents. Soon after Mike's death P. J. O'Rourke retrieved some duffel bags that Mike had stored with a Kuwait taxi driver. "I now understand why he was having such trouble with his satellite phone," P. J. said. "He left the antenna in Kuwait."

Many readers of his columns and articles disagreed strongly with his views, but no one could doubt that Mike's convictions were rooted in principle and firmly held. He enjoyed the game of reporting, the camaraderie and the chase, but he was always conscious of a higher public purpose. When, earlier this year, he made the decision to go to Iraq to cover the second war against Saddam Hussein, he explained his stance toward the conflict this way:

I covered the Gulf War as a reporter, and it was this experience, later compounded by what I saw reporting in Bosnia, that convinced me of the moral imperative, sometimes, for war. In liberated Kuwait City, one vast crime scene, I toured the morgue one day and inspected torture and murder victims left behind by the departing Iraqis ... After that, I never again could stand the arguments of those who sat in the luxury of safety—"advocating nonresistance be-

hind the guns of the American fleet," as George Orwell wrote of World War II pacifists—and held that the moral course was, in crimes against humanity as in crimes on the street corner: Better not to get involved, dear.

Writing and editing was in Mike's blood; he was the child of two journalists. He grew up on Washington's Capitol Hill, attended Jesuit schools, and graduated from the University of New Hampshire. His first job was as a booker for *Good Morning America*. Later, as a reporter for *The Baltimore Sun*, he covered Michael Dukakis's campaign for the presidency. The campaign turned out badly for Dukakis but very well for Mike, who in the course of it fell in love with a television producer, Madelyn Greenberg. They were married in 1991.

Mike covered the first Gulf War as a freelance correspondent for *The New Republic*, *The Boston Globe*, and *GQ*; his prizewinning account of that conflict, *Martyrs' Day* (1993), is an acknowledged classic of war reporting. During the nineties Mike reported on the Bush-Clinton presidential race for *The New York Times*, wrote *The New Yorker's* Letter From Washington, served as editor of *The New Republic* and *National Journal*, and began writing a syndicated column for *The Washington Post*. He became editor in chief of *The Atlantic* in September of 1999. His colleagues here knew him as a passionate and courageous advocate, an extraordinary

editor, and above all a good and generous man.

Mike's writing voice was distinctive—it bore notes of Maugham and Waugh, Mencken and Wodehouse (and the prophet Jeremiah), but was derivative of none of them. With a single deft phrase—for instance, likening Edward Kennedy's teeth to "the color of old piano keys"—he could conjure a history and create a mood. His commentaries could be unsparing, but they were something else entirely when he described the exploits of his young sons, Tom and Jack.

In these pages and in his syndicated column Mike published a number of dispatches from the war zone as he moved into Iraq this spring. He called every other day, the sound of artillery or of a raging sandstorm in the background. The last call came a few hours before he died. The Americans were getting awfully close to Baghdad, he said. Sorry, he couldn't be more specific. But he was looking forward to a shower in the Al Rashid Hotel. —THE EDITORS



Michael Kelly (1957–2003)

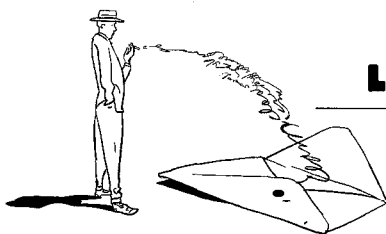
"To me documentary photography is about human dignity."

Hands: Sebastião Salgado, photographer

Tool: LEICA M7



Leica my point of view



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Miscarriage of Justice

Regarding Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s article "In Defense of Michael Skakel" (January/February *Atlantic*), every morsel of exculpatory information relevant to the Skakel case was provided to the defense well in advance of trial. Attorney Michael Sherman was both relentless and thorough in his pursuit of all those matters at trial. What Kennedy avers in his lengthy diatribe consists, almost paragraph by paragraph, of distortions, facts taken out of context, half truths, nontruths, and Skakel family post-conviction revisionism.

At the same time, Kennedy chooses to either soft-pedal or ignore most of the state's most incriminating evidence. This, of course, results in a discounting of the cumulative effect of the state's case, which comes not the least from the thirteen separate witnesses to whom Skakel made either incriminating admissions or outright confessions. Kennedy also fails at even a pretense of a critical appraisal of the defense evidence, which, quite clearly, failed to impress the jury. My impression at trial was that the defense case was so lacking in credibility that our case actually built on it.

That Michael Skakel and his family are bewildered and angered at the conviction is hardly surprising. From the very night of this horrible crime they conducted themselves in the expectation that he would get away with murder. Thankfully, the State of Connecticut was able to thwart that expectation in a case tried fairly and truly.

*Jonathan C. Benedict
State's Attorney
Bridgeport, Conn.*

As Kenneth Littleton's attorney, I must respond to the inaccuracies and distortions contained in Robert Kennedy's article. Kennedy's attempt to

point an accusatory finger at Littleton for the murder of Martha Moxley is unjustified, not only because it is erroneous but also because it unfairly seeks to use Littleton's subsequent emotional difficulties to somehow exonerate Michael Skakel, who was convicted of Moxley's murder.

Despite decades of law enforcement investigation, much of which took place with the cooperation of Littleton, no credible evidence has ever been developed that he was responsible for this ghastly murder, which occurred so soon after his employment by the Skakels.

Kennedy's scenario in which Littleton committed the murder in a drunken rage after Moxley refused his advances is absurd. I know of no evidence that Littleton was in an "alcoholic stupor" that evening. In addition, he was in the Skakel home with several members of the Skakel family and household staff, and friends. No information provided by any of these people in their various statements to the police over the years would suggest any unusual activities by Littleton during that evening. To postulate that Littleton, who never even saw Moxley, briefly left the house, beat her to death in a drunken rage, hid the body, and quickly returned to the house—without anyone's noticing anything unusual about his behavior or appearance—is preposterous.

Two additional points by Kennedy further illustrate the porosity of his argument. The composite sketch referenced in the article, of an individual seen in the vicinity that evening, is not of Kenneth Littleton, as Kennedy suggests, but of a neighborhood resident—as conclusively determined by the Greenwich Police Department years ago. Finally, the mysterious clothes, too large to fit any Skakel, found by a maid after the murder and apparently vigorously washed, were not Littleton's but Michael Skakel's. The

police determined that he had borrowed them from someone at a camp the summer prior to the murder.

The case Kennedy presents against Littleton collapses when fact separates from fiction. Littleton has certainly had difficulties in the years since this tragedy. But none of these incidents would be admissible in any court to establish that he was responsible for this murder. Nor do they logically connect him to the murder—as Skakel's multiple admissions of killing Moxley connect him.

That a member of a family that has for so many years stood for the concept of fundamental fairness for all should choose to falsely attack an unfortunate and innocent man is regrettable.

*Eugene J. Riccio
Bridgeport, Conn.*

Though I admire Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s environmental work, I'm compelled to sprinkle some acid rain on his defense of Michael Skakel. Lack of space limits me to three areas of concern.

1) Ken Littleton, the Skakel tutor in 1975, once again finds himself in the role of scapegoat. Much of what Kennedy writes about him is either false or callously distorted. It is not true, for instance, that Littleton acknowledged having been in a drunken blackout on the night of the murder. Kennedy misinterprets a transcript in which Littleton referred to a blackout in 1984, during a car trip up the East Coast. The only person in this sad story prone to alcoholic blackouts in 1975 was Michael Skakel.

Littleton is an easy mark for people who, like the former state inspector Jack Solomon, see his mental illness as a manifestation of guilt. Improbably, Littleton's paranoia turned out to be justified. Until last summer's trial (which I attended, having written a book about the case in 1998 and wanting to see how it all turned out) Littleton spent a decade be-



CHRYSLER



STYLE

lieving that he'd confessed to murdering Martha Moxley. How could this be? This is how: Littleton's ex-wife, acting at the behest of police investigators in 1992, told Littleton *falsely* that he had admitted to the crime during the alcohol-fueled delirium mentioned above. But the ruse failed to provoke the desired admission. "I said that?" was Littleton's bewildered reply. If the authorities truly believed that Littleton had said, for instance, "She wouldn't die. I had to stab her through the neck," they would have arrested him in no time flat—Inspector Solomon would have seen to it.

The notion that Littleton might be a serial killer was entertained seriously by only one man: Jack Solomon. Readers should not be fooled into thinking that Littleton was a viable suspect in other murders. And it is untrue that the Greenwich police detective Steve Carroll, whom I knew well, was anywhere near "convinced" of Littleton's guilt. Carroll leaned heavily toward Tom Skakel until, long after his retirement, evidence of Michael's involvement emerged. (My suspicions followed a similar route.)

Kennedy writes accurately that the police lost a well-scrubbed pair of dungarees, but they most certainly did not belong to Littleton, as Kennedy implies. Their provenance begins with a William Matthai, who gave them (name sewn in) to a fellow summer camper in New Hampshire: Michael Skakel. Finally, the police sketch that Kennedy describes as a "dead ringer" for Littleton—it is a pretty good likeness—also bears a strong resemblance to a neighbor known to be out walking that night.

Kennedy sometimes trips on his own reasoning. He argues, credibly, that the murder occurred around 10:00 P.M., and then puts Littleton in the Skakel kitchen at that hour. And since Kennedy acknowledges that Tom Skakel was with Martha Moxley until 9:50 and with Littleton from about 10:00 to 10:30, he all but rules out Littleton himself. (Those who would accept that a ten-minute window was sufficient for Littleton to zip out and savagely kill a girl he did not know must grapple with Julie Skakel's observation that at 10:00 Littleton seemed altogether normal—not "inflamed and in an alcoholic stupor.")

Kennedy notes (parenthetically but tellingly) that most of the Skakels say they believe the best evidence points not to Littleton but to the family gardener, Franz Wittine, who is conveniently dead. If Wittine was the monster that Kennedy describes, why did the Skakels sound no alarm in 1975?

2) Kennedy praises Michael's life of sobriety, attained in 1982, but seems mostly ignorant of his calamitous teen years. Let me help. Contrary to Kennedy's suggestion of mental soundness, Michael seemed in the grip of "a severe agitated depression . . . possibly of psychotic proportions," according to Sue Wallington Quinlan, a psychiatrist who examined him in 1977. "There is also great fury inside him focused primarily in hatred for his father," Quinlan wrote in her report. "This anger is very frightening . . ." One year later Michael led the police in Windham, New York, on a wild car chase that ended at the base of a telephone pole. (Kennedy demotes this to "a drunken car accident.") Thomas Sheridan, the family lawyer, observed at the time that Michael was "obviously a disturbed person" who "showed little or no remorse for having nearly killed the companion in his car . . . his only comment was 'Next time I won't get caught.'"

3) Kennedy's fixation on Dominick Dunne leads him to the unwarranted belief that the writer held the defense lawyer Mickey Sherman in his thrall and at the same time—through his "protégé" Mark Fuhrman—pressured Connecticut authorities to "indict a Skakel." In reality Sherman wasted few chances to attack Dunne's claims, and Michael Skakel wandered into Connecticut's crosshairs long before any "Fuhrman-Dunne view" could have coalesced. Inspector Frank Carr discovered in 1995 that Michael was now placing himself at the crime scene, and in 1996 that he had made damaging admissions to fellow denizens of Elan. (Kennedy dismisses the Elanites as "crackpots" eager to point a finger, but some who testified were, and remain, sympathetic to Michael. Two such people recall Michael's saying that either he or his brother Tom killed Martha Moxley; he couldn't remember, owing to his blackout.) At the time of Carr's discoveries Fuhrman had yet to hear Michael

Skakel's name, though he would advance a very public case against him in 1998.

Kennedy does make some worthwhile points. The national press corps did little independent investigation despite lavish attention to the case, and TV "experts" perpetuated errors at a discouraging rate. I also grant Kennedy that the case against Michael was less than airtight. (I had expected a hung jury.) But in the end his defense of Michael Skakel, replete with errors, distortions, and clever hairsplitting, is of little authentic value to readers, much less to Skakel himself.

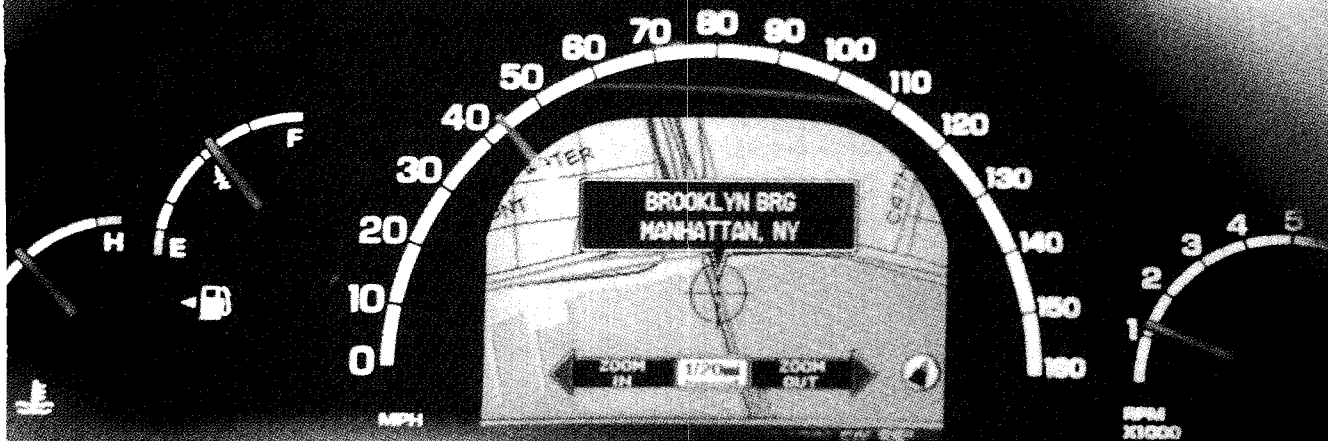
*Timothy Dumas
Greenwich, Conn.*

Robert Kennedy suggests that the jury at his cousin's trial was "eager to give the Moxleys justice." The jury simply listened to the facts and made a decision based on those facts as presented. The jury determined that a murder weapon had been identified and a motive established, along with the presence of the accused at the scene of the crime. Kennedy's opinion is that Mickey Sherman was a poor choice as a defense attorney. But if Kennedy had sat through the proceedings in their entirety, had taken in the presentation of all evidence, and had personally witnessed the credibility, or lack of it, of those called to the stand, his opinion would be the same as mine: Guilty!

That was the verdict the rest of the jury shared with me—from the moment the case was put to rest and turned over to us. In fact, from the very first "straw vote" no one offered a vote of innocence. Michael Skakel was found guilty because we took our job seriously and followed the instructions of the judge.

*Joe Conway
Juror #7
Stamford, Conn.*

Michael Skakel's plea to the judge before his sentencing, quoted in our local *Greenwich Time* newspaper, was one of the saddest and most persuasive documents I have ever read. Robert Kennedy Jr.'s defense of Skakel in your magazine provided further support that someone else killed Martha Moxley. I have a dreadful feeling that an innocent Michael Skakel could spend decades in



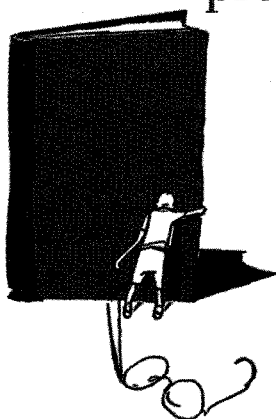
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prison, at needless and irreparable cost to his three-year-old son, bringing relief only to a vengeful Dominick Dunne, and undermining the presumption of fairness in our justice system.

Michel Guite
Greenwich, Conn.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. replies:

Jonathan Benedict fails to name a single inaccuracy in my article, in which all statements of fact were rigorously verified by Atlantic Monthly fact checkers.

Prior to trial the prosecution withheld key evidence. It included taped interviews with critical witnesses, including fifty-two hours of audio and video statements by Ken Littleton, a prime suspect; an arrest application for another suspect; and a composite portrait that is a dead ringer for Littleton by a security guard who saw the subject at the time and place of the murder. (The neighbor whom Timothy Dumas claims that sketch also resembles has an alibi for his whereabouts at the time.) Prosecutors misled the jury by offering a photograph of a large, muscular, adult Michael Skakel, claiming that it was contemporaneous with the murder, to prove that Michael (then a runt) was large enough to have mounted the ferocious assault; by ignoring key evidence regarding the time of death so as to circumvent Michael's alibi; and by misusing statements in Michael's taped book proposal to make him appear to be confessing to murder. Benedict's single-minded focus on Michael Skakel went beyond the boundaries of aggressive prosecution and assured that promising leads against other suspects were ignored or never investigated and that the real murderer is still free.

No single piece but an accumulation of evidence convicted Michael. All of the key evidence was tainted. He never confessed to any crime; the only "confession" was obviously contrived twenty-five years after the fact, by Greg Coleman, an imprisoned addict bargaining for leniency who acknowledged using heroin prior to testifying before the grand jury and changed his story repeatedly thereafter; and by John Higgins, who admitted to lying to the police about his knowledge of the case.

Michael's airtight alibi was never established before the jury, thanks to an anemic defense by an attorney so overconfident of his case that, Michael's family maintains, he failed to interview key witnesses. Mickey

Sherman also failed to call any of the dozen witnesses who offered to testify that Michael had told the same story about the murder night since the mid-seventies, in order to deflate the prosecution's central point that his story was a recent fabrication.

Littleton failed five lie-detector tests and offered the police six conflicting alibis about his whereabouts on the night of the murder. Contrary to Eugene Riccio's assertion, Littleton first denied and subsequently confessed that he was wandering the Skakel property in the vicinity of the murder at the very time the crime occurred. According to police reports, Littleton made several incriminating statements to his wife and inculpatory statements to others, and at other times expressed confusion about whether or not he had committed the crime. The supposition that he murdered Martha in a drunken rage is not mine but the chief police investigator Jack Solomon's. Littleton suffered from debilitating alcoholism and has admitted that he was drinking that night and was or may have been in an alcoholic blackout. He acknowledged making such statements at trial. He often lamented that his memories of the night were incomplete. Mr. Dumas's claim that only Jack Solomon suspected Ken Littleton as a serial murderer is wrong. Multiple police reports indicate that the possibility was being considered by Detective Frank Carr, Detroit homicide detectives, police psychologists from Detroit and Connecticut, and numerous other investigators. Dumas disparages Jack Solomon, apparently because after twenty-five years as chief investigator for the state, Solomon concluded that someone else had committed the crime, and refused to join the lynch mob against Michael Skakel. Solomon is among the most respected law-enforcement officials in Connecticut. He serves today as the chief of police in Easton, Connecticut, and was the president of Connecticut's Police Chiefs Association last year. Since the crime Littleton has been involved in many incidents of violence and sexual attacks against women. His alcoholism, bizarre behavior, and criminal activities have landed him in jails and mental institutions. Incidentally, the washed dungarees (lost by the police) belonged to a large man of Littleton's size. Michael Skakel's twenty-inch waist would have drowned in their thirty-six-inch girth. The supposed connection with Michael Skakel's fellow camper is feeble.

As I said in my article, I do not know that

Littleton committed the Moxley murder. I do know that he was one of several suspects against whom there was much stronger evidence than what prosecutors conjured and manipulated to convict Michael Skakel. My article is meant to show how two celebrity reporters pressured law-enforcement officials to turn their guns on Michael, who was never a serious suspect, while granting immunity to the state's prime suspect. In contrast to Littleton, Michael had an airtight, polygraph-certified alibi, with four witnesses as to his whereabouts—miles away—at the time. He passed multiple sodium-pentothal tests, and offered to undergo polygraphs and DNA testing. Michael's turbulent boyhood was mercifully discussed by the press and at trial. It does not make him a murderer. Michael has no record of criminal violence before or after this crime. He has lived an exemplary and sober life for twenty years. Whereas Littleton stopped cooperating with the police in 1993, the Skakel family continued to cooperate right up to the time of trial.

Like the other writers who have sold books on the supposition that a Skakel committed the crime, Dumas skeptically dismisses every fact that exonerates Michael while heaping credence on the flimsiest tidbits that suggest his guilt. One marvels at these writers' fearless willingness to bet another man's life on a hunch.

Language Police

Although I was born in the United States to native speakers of English, and consider myself competent in its use, I'm having trouble getting into the rhythm of this new K-12 *dialect* ("The Language Police," by Diane Ravitch, *March Atlantic*). For practice, I've tried using the suggested K-12 equivalents in sentences:

- Four-year-old Johnny loves to read; he's such an *intellectual* (bookworm). Why, he'd rather read a book than build a *snow person* (snowman).
- Lines at the women's bathroom during the Constitutional Convention were long, because of the number of women masquerading as *Framers* (Founding Fathers).
- Last year, while hiking in Glacier National Park, I stayed overnight in one of the ranger *small houses* (huts).
- I'm a *woodcutter* (lumberjack) and I'm okay. I sleep all night and I work all day.

• The *followers* (fanatics, extremists) of linguistic purity who thought up this gobbledygook are *people who have an emotional disorder or psychiatric illness* (insane). For them, political correctness is a *belief* (dogma) that surpasses rationality. Edwin Firmage Jr.
Salt Lake City, Utah

Diane Ravitch's list of words and stereotypes banned from educational materials brilliantly conveys the efforts of politically correct members of the academic establishment to impoverish the English language. May I suggest an aspect of this process that is normally overlooked? Though linguistic watchdogs insist that sexist expressions be eliminated from textbooks, their demands never seem to include pejorative terms. I have yet to see a list of approved expressions that includes "second-story person" or "confidence person" instead of "second-story man" or "confidence man."

Could a Bengali peasant, lost in the jungle, be apprehended and consumed by a "person-eating tiger"?

Frank Rettenberg
San Rafael, Calif.

As a multiracial American female who happens to be legally disabled, I read and even chuckled at Diane Ravitch's list. I heard the same voices that congratulate me on my good English complaining about the so-called ethnic stereotypes to avoid: "But lots of Native Americans *do* live in rural reservations! And how can it be bad to say that Asians tend to be hard workers or intelligent?"

I had to smile, however, when I saw that the words "courageous" and "inspirational" were nixed for their "patronizing" overtones. One has only to listen to a "person with disabilities" to see that he or she wants to be seen as a whole, real person with many facets to life and personality—not just to be accepted for his or her successes, but to be allowed room to fail or have a bad attitude. We want to be accepted for who we are and not prejudged by a concept of who we are supposed to be.

Erin Gieschen
Atlanta, Ga.

Some of the anti-bias terms we should supposedly avoid are not really terrible, just not the best. For example, few of my fellow disabled use "differently abled," but we do not object to other disabled people's preference for it. We find the phrase a bit silly and would not like to see it in general use, but that is not because we find it "offensive." Most people with disabilities hear "handicapped" and especially "crippled" the way the so-called "N-word" is heard by African-Americans. We have felt this way for decades.

I prefer to be known as "disabled"; Michigan's folk prefer to be called "handicappers." A handful of people favor "handicapable." I know amputees who call one another "gimps," but that's an in-group expression you had better not use. If you wish to avoid insulting large numbers of people, you will heed these suggestions.

Finally, "confined to a wheelchair" is offensive to many, but we wheelchair riders feel that wheelchairs set us free. And we are hardly nailed into the seats.

Cheryl A. Davis
Palo Alto, Calif.

Floor Time

Patricia Stacey's moving account of her son Walker's escape from autism through intense one-on-one interaction with caring adults ("Floor Time," January/February *Atlantic*) raises a fascinating question about our current "epidemic" of autism. What if human beings, as tribal animals, truly do need to be hand-raised by parents who respond to infants—look babies in the eye, smile, cuddle, coo, stroke, play peek-a-boo, react and interact? What if our autism epidemic is rooted in the socioeconomic pressure that forces so many parents to respond to their babies and toddlers only in short bursts of "quality time," and to let them learn about life from television and videos that ignore the viewer?

Thank you for publishing a fascinating article that makes us smile at every baby we see.

Margaret Harmon
San Diego, Calif.



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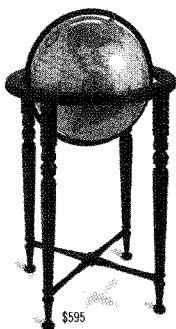
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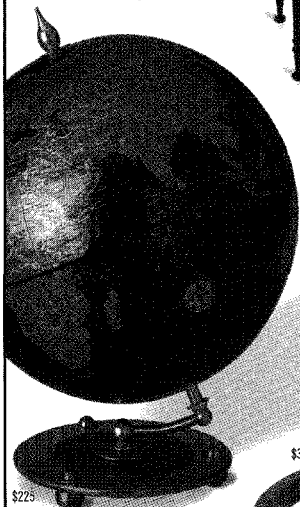


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Patricia Stacey's article fills me with hope and compassion for my six-year-old son, who, like her Walker, shines with intelligence and empathy, yet struggles to say "hi" to school friends or join in a simple game of basketball. After round after round of meetings, special-education consultations, and piles of meaningless jargon and dead-end ideas on treating autism, I found in Stacey's observations a much needed jolt of clarity in a very muddled life situation.

Margaret McCrae
Honolulu, Hawaii

Anecdotes of recovery from autism are as numerous as the competing treatments for it. Dr. Stanley Greenspan's 50 percent cure rate seems quite impressive until you notice the huge selection bias in his chart review. He considers only those who had at least two years of six to ten thirty-minute floor-time sessions a day—a grueling regimen for anyone whose child isn't progressing much.

I don't doubt that Patricia Stacey's son really did outgrow a subtype of autism, and I congratulate her on her strenuous work. Nor do I question whether Walker's underlying problem was a hypersensitivity to sensory stimuli: naturally one retreats when overloaded. But there are many subtypes of autism, and not all of them result from sensory dysfunction.

Katharine Beals
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dr. Stanley Greenspan implies that he knows of no definitive evidence of benefit for children with autism from either floor time or "Lovaas therapy." Unfortunately, this is only half right. We do lack definitive evidence of benefit from floor time. But some solid research suggests that interventions like Lovaas therapy, based on applied behavior analysis, are the most beneficial therapies available for young children with autism spectrum disorders.

Betsy Welch

Association for Science in Autism Treatment
Portland, Maine

Patricia Stacey replies:

The Lovaas method has apparently helped many children, but Lovaas supporters are

relying on a study that is not as reliable as Betsy Welch suggests. The study, published in 1987 in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, has been criticized for its lack of rigorous methodology. Its subjects were not a representative population; children chosen for it had to satisfy certain criteria (in essence, appear to be more likely to succeed). Furthermore, children were not randomly assigned to groups. Perhaps most questionable are the study's criteria for success—IQ and educational skills. In the only published full replication of the study, using true clinical-trial methodology, the Lovaas ABA approach showed a 13 percent success rate for educational gains as opposed to the 47 percent cited in the original study. The replication study, moreover, showed little or no gains in important social and emotional capacities.

Like critics of the Lovaas study, Katharine Beals criticizes Greenspan's chart review for its selection bias. But Greenspan emphasizes the limitations of his chart review, and neither document is definitive evidence, as I say in my article. Ms. Beals also raises the useful point that some subtypes of autism are resistant to treatment, an issue I discuss in my forthcoming book, *The Boy Who Loved Windows*, from which the article was taken. I disagree, however, that the axioms of Greenspan's approach ignore the diversity of autism. In fact, the very essence of his approach is to embrace diversity. Through his program one seeks to know a child profoundly through his particular learning style, to approach him with empathy and sensitivity for his weaknesses, to use his strengths as leverage to overcome those weaknesses.

I heartily agree with Margaret Harmon that our culture's obsession with videos and television is limiting our children's social development. Still, it's important to emphasize—lest we fall into the faulty reasoning that drove Bruno Bettelheim and other early clinicians to blame parents for their children's illnesses—that autism is a disorder proven to have a biological basis.

Caring for Your Introvert

Jonathan Rauch's March article "Caring for Your Introvert" was a masterpiece. I know, because my name is David and I, too, am an introvert. Rauch's de-

scription of our kind was so accurate that at first I thought he must have interviewed my often frustrated wife for his material. But Rauch's fantasized "Introverts Rights Movement" will never happen. It would require far too much interaction with those uncomprehending extroverts!

David S. Sowell
Dallas, Texas

Let me, as a fellow introvert, relate to Jonathan Rauch an actual exchange that he could find useful. My wife asked me, "Are you speaking to yourself again?" I replied, "Yes—and I don't want to be interrupted."

Sam Pakenham-Walsh
West Columbia, Texas

Hooray for Jonathan Rauch and his desperately needed "Caring for Your Introvert." I am exultant. I laughed out loud no fewer than fourteen times. I have shrunk and laminated a hundred copies of the article, and carry a few in my shirt pocket. Now, when someone

perplexed by more than fifteen seconds of silence asks, "What are you thinking about?" I simply hand him or her a copy and retire to the basement.

Kurt Fischer
Roseville, Minn.

Post-President for Life

In his article "Post-President for Life" (March *Atlantic*), James Fallows made a serious misstatement about President Dwight Eisenhower's health in 1960 when he said "Before Clinton only Dwight Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan were affected by the Twenty-second Amendment, and both were too old and sick to have run again anyway."

As a member of Eisenhower's White House staff and a witness to his sound health, well-being, and active schedule during campaign year 1960, I can assure you that President Eisenhower was in very good health then and for years thereafter.

Douglas R. Price
Chestertown, Md.

I call to your attention a quirky and potentially misleading statement made in James Fallows's article. It is ungenerous of Fallows to claim that President Cleveland was unceremoniously "voted out" after being elected. In fact, like Al Gore, Cleveland won the majority of the popular vote. It would have been more precise to say that he lost the election because the electoral count went against him on his first re-election attempt.

Craig T. Robertson
Huntington Station, N.Y.

James Fallows replies:

Douglas Price saw Eisenhower firsthand, and I did not. It is also true that Eisenhower survived for eight years after leaving office, long enough to see his former Vice President, Richard Nixon, inaugurated. But he had six heart attacks in his post-presidential period, and press accounts at the end of his second term portrayed him as being in failing health overall.

Craig Robertson is right about the circumstances of Grover Cleveland's "defeat"; I appreciate the clarification.

July 18, 2006

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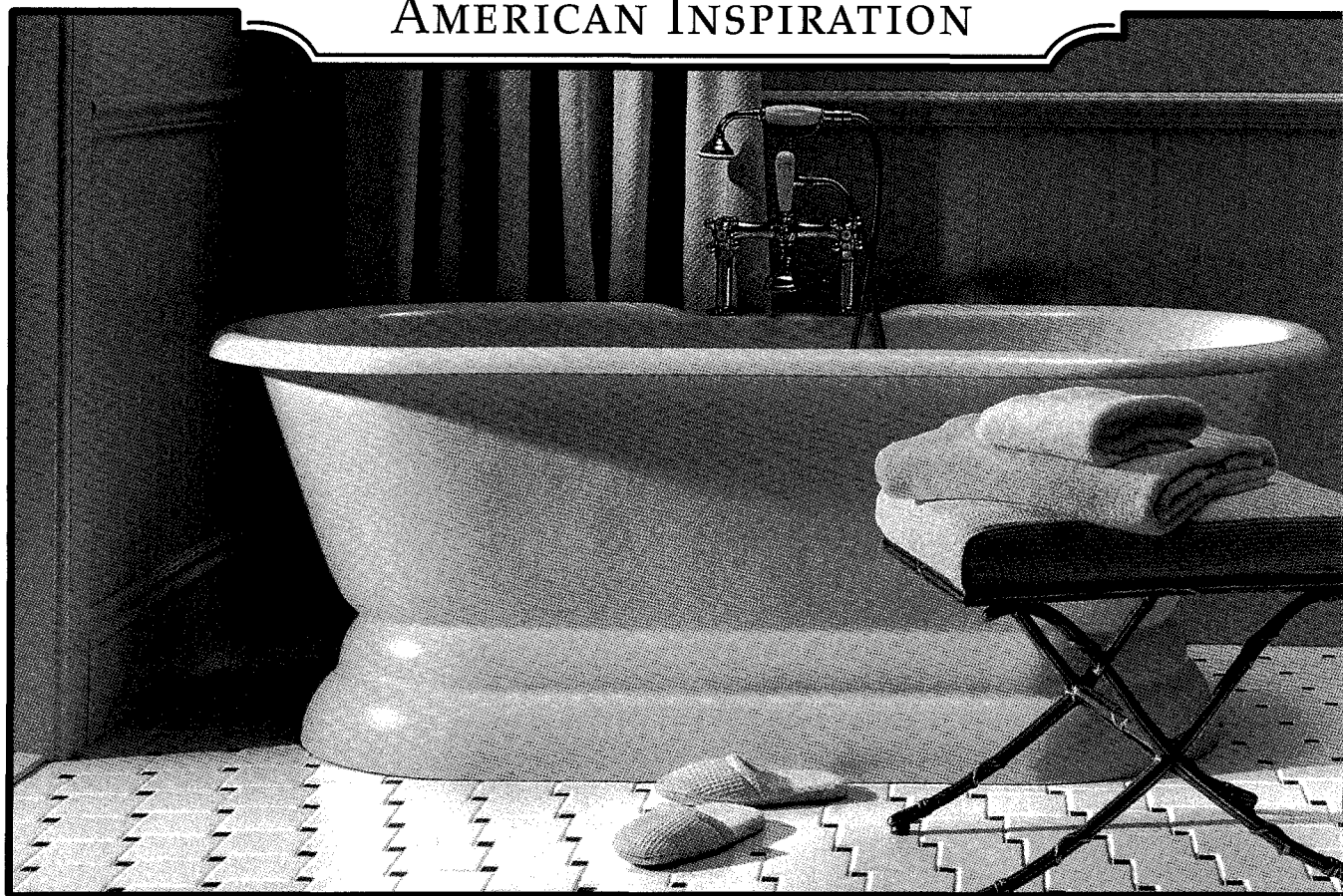
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THE AGENDA

THIS MONTH, an essay on totalitarianism's psychological effects; one *Washingtonian's* doomsday scenario; body fat across the world

DAVID BROOKS

"The Iraqis have been living on the dark side of the moral universe. I hope our soldiers aren't thinking that the people they encounter ... will respond to events in the ways Americans would." PAGE 28

MICHELLE COTTLE

"Thanks to the passengers of Flight 93 ... Congress escaped catastrophe on 9/11. But next time, Norman Ornstein says, it may not be so lucky ... Ornstein's mission is to prod lawmakers into writing, in effect, a collective will that would prepare the federal government to handle mass casualties within its ranks." PAGE 30

PRIMARY SOURCES

"According to a study conducted by ... a Chicago-based outplacement company, if all 36.6 million Americans with a bachelor's degree ... spend ten minutes each day talking about the [March Madness' basketball] pool during the fifteen-day tournament, the U.S. economy loses \$1.4 billion." PAGE 34

THE WORLD IN NUMBERS

"Surprisingly, health problems associated with obesity may be more severe in poor countries than in the United States, according to a recent World Health Organization report." PAGE 38

A TRANSFORMATIVE MOMENT

The following is excerpted from the afterword to Michael Kelly's book Martyrs' Day, about the first Gulf War. Kelly was killed in Iraq in early April as he accompanied American forces advancing on Baghdad

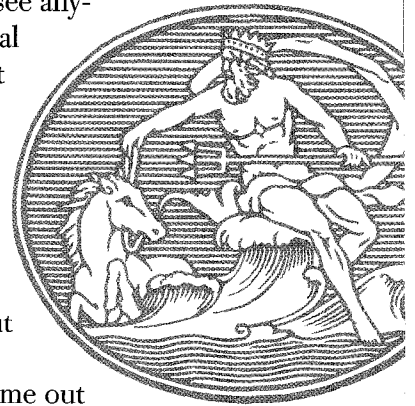
BY MICHAEL KELLY

.....

Not long after the Gulf War ended, there was a victory parade held in Washington and, as I happened to be back in the United States at the time, I went to it. It was an oddly disquieting affair. The parade was all that that sort of thing should be, a splendid evocation of military might and military discipline—ranks and ranks of marching troops and America's great machines of war, overwhelmingly the best in the world, streaming down Pennsylvania Avenue past the White House. What was lacking was any real passion. Although the day was sunny and pleasant, the crowd that had turned out for the parade was surprisingly small, and there was something of a perfunctory feel to it. I saw a lot of people—both participants in the event and onlookers—who seemed happy to be there, pleased with themselves and life that day, but I didn't see anybody in the slightest danger of losing emotional control. There was no sense that I could detect of immense joy or vast relief and thanks be to God, the sort of emotions one associates with victory and the return of the victorious army. Indeed, it seemed to me, there was an undercurrent of let-down to the day.

I figured this to be fanciful, a product more of my own mood than anything real, but I don't think so now. I think even then there were the beginnings of a sense that we had come out of this thing with a great deal less than we should have—that we had in a sense muffed it. This sense that we had somehow managed to snatch a quasi-defeat out of victory soon grew much stronger and became much more defined. It was clear within a few months after the war that the Bush Administration's determination to end Operation Desert Storm at the so-called "Hundred Hours" marker, to allow what was left (and quite a lot was left) of Saddam's Republican Guard to escape, had been a disastrous decision—disastrous on a historic level, and disastrous in a way that led directly, if in a complex way, to the catastrophe of September 11, 2001, and to the belated, forced resumption of an unfinished war.

Above all, the United States missed its greatest transformative opportunity since the close of the Second World War. A unique thing





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Generic name: rofecoxib ("ro-fa-COX-ib")**

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You should read this information before you start taking VIOXX*. Also, read the leaflet each time you refill your prescription, in case any information has changed. This leaflet provides only a summary of certain information about VIOXX. Your doctor or pharmacist can give you an additional leaflet that is written for health professionals that contains more complete information. This leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIOXX when you start taking your medicine and at regular checkups.

What is VIOXX?

VIOXX is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that is used to reduce pain and inflammation (swelling and soreness). VIOXX is available as a tablet or a liquid that you take by mouth.

VIOXX is a medicine for:

- relief of osteoarthritis (the arthritis caused by age-related "wear and tear" on bones and joints)
- relief of rheumatoid arthritis in adults
- management of acute pain in adults (like the short-term pain you can get after a dental or surgical operation)
- treatment of menstrual pain (pain during women's monthly periods).

Who should not take VIOXX?

Do not take VIOXX if you:

- have had an allergic reaction such as asthma attacks, hives, or swelling of the throat and face to aspirin or other NSAIDs (for example, ibuprofen and naproxen).
- have had an allergic reaction to rofecoxib, which is the active ingredient of VIOXX, or to any of its inactive ingredients. (See Inactive Ingredients at the end of this leaflet.)

What should I tell my doctor before and during treatment with VIOXX?

Tell your doctor if you are:

- pregnant or plan to become pregnant. VIOXX should not be used in late pregnancy because it may harm the fetus.
- breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. It is not known whether VIOXX is passed through to human breast milk and what its effects could be on a nursing child.

Tell your doctor if you have:

- history of angina, heart attack or a blocked artery in your heart
- kidney disease
- liver disease
- heart failure
- high blood pressure
- had an allergic reaction to aspirin or other NSAIDs
- had a serious stomach problem in the past.

Tell your doctor about:

- any other medical problems or allergies you have now or have had.
- all medicines that you are taking or plan to take, even those you can get without a prescription.

Tell your doctor if you develop:

- serious stomach problems such as ulcer or bleeding symptoms (for instance, stomach burning or black stools, which are signs of possible stomach bleeding).
- unexplained weight gain or swelling of the feet and/or legs.
- skin rash or allergic reactions. If you have a severe allergic reaction, get medical help right away.

How should I take VIOXX?

VIOXX should be taken once a day. Your doctor will decide what dose of VIOXX you should take and how long you should take it. You may take VIOXX with or without food.

Can I take VIOXX with other medicines?

Tell your doctor about all of the other medicines you are taking or plan to take while you are on VIOXX, even other medicines that you can get without a prescription. Your doctor may want to check that your medicines are working properly together if you are taking other medicines such as:

- warfarin (a blood thinner)
- theophylline (a medicine used to treat asthma)
- rifampin (an antibiotic)
- ACE inhibitors (medicines used for high blood pressure and heart failure)
- lithium (a medicine used to treat a certain type of depression).

VIOXX cannot take the place of aspirin for prevention of heart attack or stroke. If you are currently taking aspirin for this purpose, you should not discontinue taking aspirin without consulting your doctor.

What are the possible side effects of VIOXX?

Serious but rare side effects that have been reported in patients taking VIOXX and/or related medicines have included:

- Serious stomach problems, such as stomach and intestinal bleeding, can occur with or without warning symptoms. These problems, if severe, could lead to hospitalization or death. Although this happens rarely, you should watch for signs that you may have this serious side effect and tell your doctor right away.
- Heart attacks and similar serious events have been reported in patients taking VIOXX.
- Serious allergic reactions including swelling of the face, lips, tongue, and/or throat which may cause difficulty breathing or swallowing and wheezing occur rarely but may require treatment right away. Severe skin reactions have also been reported.
- Serious kidney problems occur rarely, including acute kidney failure and worsening of chronic kidney failure.
- Severe liver problems, including hepatitis, jaundice and liver failure, occur rarely in patients taking NSAIDs, including VIOXX. Tell your doctor if you develop symptoms of liver problems. These include nausea, tiredness, itching, tenderness in the right upper abdomen, and flu-like symptoms.

In addition, the following side effects have been reported: anxiety, blurred vision, colitis, confusion, decreased levels of sodium in the blood, depression, fluid in the lungs, hair loss, hallucinations, increased levels of potassium in the blood, insomnia, low blood cell counts, menstrual disorder, palpitations, pancreatitis, severe increase in blood pressure, tingling sensation, unusual headache with stiff neck (aseptic meningitis), vertigo.

More common, but less serious side effects reported with VIOXX have included the following:

Upper and/or lower respiratory infection and/or inflammation
Headache
Dizziness
Diarrhea
Nausea and/or vomiting
Heartburn, stomach pain and upset
Swelling of the legs and/or feet
High blood pressure
Back pain
Tiredness
Urinary tract infection.

These side effects were reported in at least 2% of osteoarthritis patients receiving daily doses of VIOXX 12.5 mg to 25 mg in clinical studies.

The side effects described above do not include all of the side effects reported with VIOXX. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor or pharmacist can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects. Any time you have a medical problem you think may be related to VIOXX, talk to your doctor.

What else can I do to help manage my arthritis pain?

Talk to your doctor about:

- Exercise
- Controlling your weight
- Hot and cold treatments
- Using support devices.

What else should I know about VIOXX?

This leaflet provides a summary of certain information about VIOXX. If you have any questions or concerns about VIOXX, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis or pain, talk to your health professional. Your pharmacist can give you an additional leaflet that is written for health professionals.

Do not share VIOXX with anyone else; it was prescribed only for you. It should be taken only for the condition for which it was prescribed.

Keep VIOXX and all medicines out of the reach of children.

Inactive Ingredients:

Oral suspension: citric acid (monohydrate), sodium citrate (dihydrate), sorbitol solution, strawberry flavor, xanthan gum, sodium methylparaben, sodium propylparaben.

Tablets: croscarmellose sodium, hydroxypropyl cellulose, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, and yellow ferric oxide.

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about America is that although it is a colossal power it is not, in its heart or in its strategies, an imperial one. Alone among the super-nations through history, America has generally (there are exceptions) not sought to exploit its victories to rule over other nations. What transformed America's relationship with Europe was not just America's defense of Europe from fascism, but, even more extraordinary, America's behavior after fascism's defeat—its determination to stay in Europe not as a conqueror but as a protector against the continuing threat of communism, and to help rebuild Europe into what would become America's greatest economic rival. This postwar demonstration of the American ethos in action shattered the old dynamic between Europe and America and forged a new dynamic rooted in an earned respect and affection toward America on the part of the average European that would prove strong enough to sustain itself through half a century of cold war trials, and is sustained still.

What was above all lost in the decision to quit too soon in Iraq was the opportunity to demonstrate to the Arabic and Islamic nations the truth about America that Europe came to learn. What would have happened had the allied forces led by the United States in the Gulf War fought on into Iraq with the aim of destroying Saddam Hussein's army and ending Saddam Hussein's regime?

The effect of this in the dynamic between the West and the Arabic and Islamic nations would have been extraordinary, I think. As Americans have become much more aware since September 11, the extremist (and ascendant) strain in these countries draws its strength from several perceptions of the United States: that it is at bottom weak and

fearful, that it is corrupt, that it is cynical and untrustworthy, that its motives for meddling in the Middle East are all about oil and power and imperialism. All of this could have been given the lie by a successful conclusion to the Gulf War; all of it was seemingly confirmed by the conclusion of the Gulf War that was allowed to occur. As far as anyone could see, the facts of the case were

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plain as day: To preserve its cheap oil and imperial prerogatives we sent in an army to prop up one kleptocracy (Saudi Arabia), rescue another (Kuwait), and destroy the regime of the only Arab state that had ever dared openly to challenge us. But in this latter goal we failed, because we were cowards and we ran away, and in running away, we chose to betray the poor people whom we had seduced into rising up against Saddam with promises of support—and we had thereby, cynically, sent thousands to their deaths.

This lesson, which was so destructive to any American hopes of building upon its tentative new identity forged in the Gulf War as an ally to Arab peoples, was repeatedly reinforced in the years following the war, and all of the reinforcing messages stemmed directly from the consequences of quitting too soon. Quitting too soon meant that Saddam stayed in power. In turn this meant that Saddam continued to refuse to cooperate with the strictures of weapons inspections and air control to which he had agreed in his treaty for peace. And that meant the United States and the United Nations must continue economic sanctions against Iraq, weapons inspections, and what would become in effect the longest (and most lopsided) air war in history, ten years as of this writing and still winging along.

Historians looking back on the time

from the waning days of the Gulf War until September 11 will, I think, tend to see it as a sort of phony-war time, a time of delusion and inattention at the highest levels of policymaking. The general delusion was that we were living, to borrow a phrase, at the time of the end of history—a time of no great thematic struggle, no clash of ideologies. Some, most notably the historian and theorist Samuel Huntington, argued the counter-case. We were not living in the era of the end of thematic struggle but in a dawning era of new (or rather very old) thematic struggle: not between competing political and economic ideologies, but between competing nationalist movements and competing cultures: a clash of civilizations.

Seen in this light, the Gulf War was no mere operation, no discrete and isolated "crisis" that could be contained well or poorly but was at any rate containable. But the views of such as Huntington were not welcome during the two Clinton administrations, which, in foreign policy terms, were characterized by a policy structured nearly entirely around sporadic crisis-management. Somalia came and went, and so did Rwanda, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and all of these were just "crises," to be contained by "operations." In part, this mind-set reflected the inadequacies of a president who, until very late in his term, was astonishingly uninterested in anything to do with matters apart from domestic politics. In at least as large a measure, however, the crisis-management way of looking at the world reflects a larger mind-set, the mind-set of the U.S. military and the U.S. government in general, the mind-set that called the Gulf War an operation, and declared it ended for reasons no more rational than my favorite one, publicly given at the time: "The Hundred-Hour War" had a nice ring to it. That, I hope, is all done with now. ■

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BUILDING DEMOCRACY OUT OF WHAT?

The Iraqi people, and anyone who wants to help them, will have to deal with the long-term psychological trauma of life under Saddam

In the early 1990s, while covering the decline and fall of the Soviet Union, I observed a curious phenomenon. The inside of every apartment I visited was tidy and clean. But every building's vestibule, hallways, and stairs were filthy and rancid. The floors looked as if they'd never been mopped; lights were burned out; the air reeked of urine. I started asking people why they didn't get together to clean up the hallways. After all, I'd say, there are four or five families living on your floor. A half hour's shared work and it would be done.

They'd give various reasons: The neighbor on this side is an alcoholic. The neighbor on that side we never see. But the real reason was that after seven decades of living under totalitarianism, they didn't know whom they could trust; they didn't know if their neighbors belonged to the secret police. By that time citizens were no longer being sent off in large numbers to the gulags for minor or manufactured crimes, but the bonds of normal society had been destroyed. People's souls had been damaged by decades of terror and mass murder.

Memories of that time came to me as I looked at images of our soldiers in Iraq during the early days of the war. The soldiers were thrust among people who have been living with random violence, invisible but constant surveillance, arbitrary law, and brutal repression for more than three decades. In short, the Iraqis have been living on the dark side of the moral universe. I hope our soldiers aren't thinking that the people they encounter have been undamaged by their experience, or that they will respond to events in the ways Americans would.

And I hope that we at home aren't underestimating the weirdness of what the soldiers encounter. During the first days of the war many Americans assumed that it would be over, as so many said, "in a flash." This is a natural impulse, common at the start of wars. We

realize that what we're embarking on is a terrible enterprise, so we want to believe that it will be easy and short—that the boys will be home for Christmas, as they used to say.

It almost never works out that way. But part of our dream this time was that the average Iraqi would react to our invasion as we thought we might react under similar circumstances. As soon as the military power of the United States became apparent to the Iraqis, we imagined, millions of them would rise up to seize freedom and overthrow tyranny. They'd see that Saddam was doomed and quickly switch to the winning side.

I got caught up in those hopes as much as anybody else, even though, because of my experience in the former Soviet Union, I had little excuse. In addition, I'd read Hannah Arendt. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) she drew a crucial distinction between tyranny and totalitarianism. In a tyranny, she wrote, the leader lives apart from the people. He exploits them for whatever money, power, and position his lusts require, but he doesn't try to reshape who they are. In a totalitarian state, Arendt argued, the leader gets inside people's heads. He constructs a regime that is everywhere, one that seeks to obliterate spontaneity, creativity, and individual initiative, and to dictate thought. The result is not over-politicization but a perverse depoliticization of life. People come to understand that they cannot think a political thought, because the wrong one could get them executed. They lose the habits of citizenship. Society becomes atomized. Individuals experience psychological isolation and loneliness, because they can't be sure that even their own family members won't betray them. They fall into a passivity induced by the impossibility of freedom. All they have is their perpetually whipped-up nationalism and the omnipresence of their dictator.

If Saddam's regime had been merely a tyranny, perhaps the Iraqis would

have risen up at the start of the war, as we hoped. But the ideology of the Baath Party was formulated by intellectuals who studied in Paris in the 1930s. They combined a deep admiration for Nazi ideas with a respect for Leninist party structure. Saddam himself especially idolized Stalin, and the regime he established was an Arab amalgam of the most brutal twentieth-century totalitarianisms, with an Islamic element added in the final decade. As events in Iraq unfold, we need to remember that every segment of Iraqi society has been profoundly affected by that regime.

Let's start with the oppressors. According to estimates from Human Rights Watch, Saddam's forces have killed or caused the disappearance of some 290,000 Iraqis. Thousands more were killed during ethnic-cleansing campaigns against the Kurds and the Shiites. Killing that many people and processing their corpses requires a huge apparatus. Saddam was careful to implicate as many people as possible: for example, he ordered civilian advisers to serve on firing squads, so that they, too, would have blood on their hands. The people who manned that apparatus are not unhurt by what they did.

What is it like to be an official in a government that rules by terror? What sort of taste for sadism grows in one's heart? What does murdering fellow citizens, even neighbors, do to one's soul? How has a person who has performed such deeds justified them, and is that person likely to give up that justification simply because American troops appear?

One has probably been regarded with fear and trembling by everybody else, and may have developed a lust for blood and violence. "When we are cruel to others, we know that our cruelty is in order to bring them back to their true selves, of which they are ignorant," Michel Aflaq, a founder of the Baath Party, once wrote.

The Fedayeen Saddam have probably experienced the same sensations that motivated members of the Gestapo and

IDEAS
**DAVID
BROOKS**



the KGB—the desire to inflict pain, the feeling that one is so powerful in serving one's cause, and so superior to others, that one can maim and kill at will. Earlier this year the U.S. State Department reported that members of the Fedayeen went on a beheading spree, lopping off the heads of more than 200 women in the name of stamping out prostitution. Their zealous cruelty brings to mind an SS guard Arendt described in her book. "Usually I keep on hitting until I ejaculate," the guard told an interviewer. "I used to be perfectly normal. That's what they've made of me."

And what of the subjects of Saddam's regime? What is it like to have one's mind invaded without respite by such a man and his propaganda? What is it like to live a life dominated by fear, by the knowledge that at any moment an official might rape one's daughter or kill one's son? What is it like to live in a society of emotionally wounded people who have lost friends and family to the regime, to the war against Iran, to the first Gulf War?

My *Weekly Standard* colleague Matt Labash learned of one incident that, though shocking to an American sensibility, is merely typical of Saddam's Iraq. A man was arrested for a minor infraction, beaten, and detained; finally he was told he was being released. Baath Party officials escorted him from the jail to his home, where his family joyfully gathered around him. Then the officials shot him in the head.

Hannah Arendt is famous for her phrase "the banality of evil," but she was also struck by the radicalism of evil—by humankind's ability to be evil in ways that destroy all norms, all expectations, all sense of order. When Baath Party officials took children hostage to force their brothers and fathers to fight against the United States this spring, they were committing the sort of crime that Arendt had remarked on in other totalitarian regimes. "The alternative is no longer between good and evil, but between murder and murder," she wrote. "Who could solve the moral dilemma of the Greek mother, who was allowed by the Nazis to choose which of her three children should be killed?"

One simply doesn't recover from experiences like these. At the start of the war the prominent Iraqi intellectual Kanan Makiya began posting a diary on *The New Republic's* Web site. In one entry he described an Iraqi friend who had suddenly flown into a rage over a trivial slight. The man had relatives who had been murdered, Makiya pointed out; he himself had been starved and tortured. "Try to imagine the worst and still you will not come close to the physical pain this man has suffered," Makiya wrote, addressing fellow exiles.

And remember while you are trying to imagine what this person went through, that this is the human raw material that you want to build democracy for.

Every day in the last five weeks

of my travels I have come across such damaged and wounded people, people who breathe nationalism, sectarianism, without knowing that they are doing so, and people who are deeply chauvinistic and suspicious toward their fellow Iraqis. These are the facts of life for the next generation in this poor, unhappy and ravaged land. Don't even think of coming back to it after liberation if you are not prepared to deal with such facts.

Makiya holds fervently to the vision of an Iraqi democracy. He has devoted the past three decades of his life to making this vision a reality. But he knows that the blood shed during thirty-five years of Saddam's rule will not wash away in a lifetime or two. The Iraqi people, along with any nations that try to help rebuild Iraq, will be dealing with the psychological and spiritual aftershocks of the country's trauma for a long time.

Perhaps the most sickening aspect of the Iraqi drama has been Saddam's popularity in various parts of the world. Here is a man responsible for the deaths of more Muslims than any other person in recent history. But Palestinians carrying his photograph marched in his support, and so did large numbers of people in other Arab countries. Majorities in Europe told pollsters that Saddam's threat to peace was equal to or less than that of George Bush.

Part of this reaction is pure anti-Americanism. But part of it is the strong if secret admiration that many people have for cruel power and unabashed strength. Totalitarianism exists, Arendt said, because it solves certain psychological problems: it eliminates uncertainty and it casts politics in a maximalist, seemingly heroic role. It will survive, if not in Iraq, then in North Korea, or in a terrorist cell somewhere. And as bizarre as it may seem to us, there will always be people willing to fight and die in order to preserve it. ■

David Brooks, an Atlantic correspondent, is also a contributing editor of Newsweek, a senior editor of The Weekly Standard, and a political analyst for The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer.

NORMAN ORNSTEIN'S DOOMSDAY SCENARIO

What would happen if a bomb wiped out the federal government?

Call him the Cassandra of Capitol Hill. For nearly two years Norman Ornstein, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, has been running around Washington auguring doom and calling on lawmakers to ponder a horrific question: What would have happened if United Flight 93, brought down in the fields of southwestern Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001, had departed Newark on time?

"We know that United 93 crashed in Pennsylvania only because it left forty minutes late," Ornstein says; otherwise its passengers would not have learned that their hijackers were on a suicide mission, and so would have had little incentive to risk storming the cockpit. Rather than roaring to earth near the town of Shanksville, Flight 93 would have continued south to Washington, where the terrorists, it is now believed, intended to guide their stolen missile into the dome of the Capitol. "Hundreds of people could have been killed," Ornstein says. Hundreds of others could have been gravely injured. "The Capitol dome is cast iron, so if the plane had hit it the way those planes hit the Trade Center, you would have had molten iron raining down on the heads of hundreds or thousands of people." In considering the potential carnage, Ornstein says, it occurred to him, "Wait a minute—what does that mean for a quorum?" The Constitution dictates that House members may be replaced only through special elections, which take months to organize. "So at the worst possible time," he says, "there's no Congress"—which means no one with the authority to declare war, appropriate money, or make laws. "What you're doing is condoning for what would be a sizable period of time a form of martial law. And when people say, 'Well, what's so bad about that?' I say, 'Two words: John Ashcroft.'"

Thanks to the passengers of Flight 93 (and the inefficiency of the airlines), Congress escaped catastrophe on 9/11.

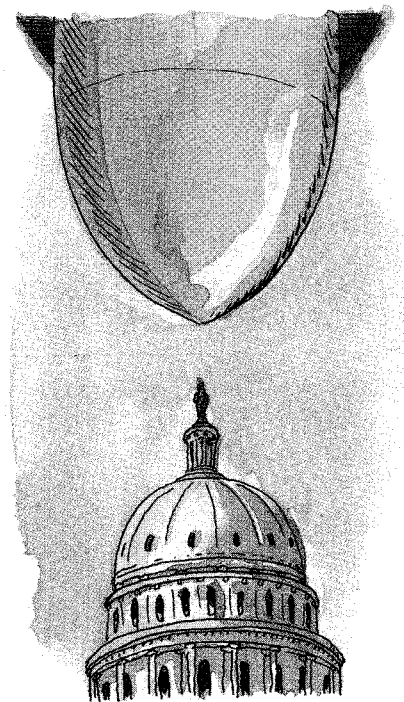
But next time, Ornstein says (and he is certain there will be a next time), it may not be so lucky: "As you think about the history of al Qaeda, they go after a target and if they don't get it, they'll come back in a couple of years." Ornstein's mission is to prod lawmakers into writing, in effect, a collective will that would prepare the federal government to handle mass casualties within its ranks.

Through endless phoning, lobbying, and writing on the subject, Ornstein has recruited enough supporters to create a blue-ribbon commission. Launched last fall, the commission is co-chaired by the former senator Alan Simpson and the former White House counsel Lloyd Cutler, and includes such political luminaries as the former congressmen Newt Gingrich and Thomas Foley. Operating under the deceptively soothing name Continuity of Government Commission, these political insiders and constitutional scholars spend their time debating macabre questions: Precisely how many House members must die to trigger a state of emergency? What constitutes a quorum if fifty senators survive a sarin attack but twenty of them are temporarily incapacitated? Worst case: who assumes the presidency if a deranged Islamist sneaks a nuclear suitcase bomb into an inaugural (Ornstein's doomsday scenario of choice), vaporizing not only the President and the Vice President but also most of the Cabinet, the Supreme Court, and Congress?

The commission's first report, released this spring, recommended ways to cope with the sudden decimation of Congress. A second report will tackle casualties in the executive and judiciary branches. Although differences among the commissioners abound, all agree that the current system threatens to leave the nation rudderless in its most vulnerable hour.

In reviewing existing law, the commission has outlined some of the more outrageous scenarios that could come to

pass. For instance, the Constitution says that the House may conduct official business only when a quorum is present—currently at least 218 of the 435 members. Since the Civil War, however, the House parliamentarian has interpreted a quorum as a majority of members "elected, sworn, and living," in Ornstein's words. Ornstein finds this interpretation not only constitutionally dubious but also, in practical terms, absurd. "You could end up with, say, eight members being alive—five of them constituting a quorum," he says. Imagine a three-person quorum consisting of the ultraconservatives Tom DeLay, Ernest Istook, and Dan Burton—or of the leftists Maxine Waters, Charles Rangel, and Nancy Pelosi. How legitimate would the country consider such a body? Even more frightening, Ornstein adds, this abbre-



viated quorum could elect a new speaker of the House, who would then jump up the line of succession for the Oval Office. As set by the Presidential Succession Act of 1947 (which Ornstein calls "an abomination"), the line now goes from the Vice President to the speaker of the House to the Senate president

POLITICS
**MICHELLE
COTTE**

pro tempore (who until two years ago was the terrifyingly dotty Strom Thurmond) and then down through the Cabinet, according to the order in which the offices were created. "You have a provision in this law," Ornstein says, "which is just mind-boggling—that if you go down to the Cabinet level to fill the presidency, the speaker can at any subsequent point bump that person and assume the office." In other words, if a catastrophe made Secretary of State Colin Powell acting President, a quorum of Burton, Istook, and DeLay could elect DeLay the new speaker, and he could elbow President Powell right out of office. Not scared yet? Assuming that the Supreme Court had also been destroyed in the blast, President DeLay would then be in a position to fill all those vacancies.

In recommending a new strategy, most of the commissioners settled on a short, simple constitutional amendment granting Congress the authority to establish guidelines for selecting temporary members in an emergency. (Making the amendment itself more detailed, Ornstein says, would increase the risk of "unintended consequences.") Congress could fashion whatever system it chose, but Ornstein—among others—favors having the nation's governors take the lead in selecting replacements. Following an attack each governor would determine whether a majority of his or her state's congressional delegation was "dead, missing, or out of service." If so, the governor would sign a proclamation to that effect; if a majority of governors signed such proclamations, each governor would make temporary appointments. As for whom the individual governors would appoint, Ornstein favors a provision like the one added to Delaware's constitution during the Cold War, whereby each elected official, before being sworn in, compiles a short list of possible replacements. In an emergency governors would pick from these lists. "So you still have gubernatorial discretion," Ornstein reasons, "but you

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— Samuel Butler



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make sure it's somebody that basically fits within the guidelines set by the former incumbent."

The commission just recently turned its attention to the issue of presidential succession, but Ornstein long ago began a dialogue with the White House about what he regards as a necessary overhaul. "Just making sure one Cabinet schnook is kept away from the State of the Union is not adequate anymore," he says. "And you've got all kinds of people in the line of succession who should not be. Look at this Cabinet—or look at the last Cabinet. Or any Cabinet where the President makes choices based on ethnic considerations or geographical considerations or ideological considerations." What's more, the Constitution stipulates that the line of succession should go from the Vice President "to such other Officers—capital O—as Congress will designate," he says. "‘Officer’ means an executive-branch officer. And the Constitution makes it clear that a member of Congress—such as the speaker of the House and the president pro tem of the Senate—‘can’t be an executive-branch officer.’"

But despite the commission's labors, and Ornstein's relentless lobbying, Congress seems disinclined to take up the cause. In February of last year a House judiciary subcommittee held hearings on the subject. "It was a perfectly good hearing," Ornstein told me. "But it became clear to me during and afterward that Steve Chabot, who's the chairman of the subcommittee, really had no intention of doing more than holding a hearing ... And I think that was probably pretty much the direction he got from the speaker and the chairman of the committee." And although amendments dealing with congressional continuity have been introduced in both the House and the Senate, the amendments appear unlikely to move toward a vote anytime soon. "For the life of me," Ornstein says, "I can't understand how smart people in positions of authority and those who care about their own institutions can look at this and not say it

is irresponsible for us not to take some steps to protect the country." The foot-dragging appears to have several causes. "There is some resistance to the notion of a constitutional amendment," Ornstein says, "although I have to tell you that a lot of that resistance comes from people who support amendments on abortion and flag-burning and the like." Other members cling tightly to the traditional House, a body composed entirely of elected members—distinguishing it from the Senate, to which governors may appoint replacements. Still others think in personal terms. "They think of their governors replacing them and say, 'Well, I'm not going to let *him* replace me,'" Ornstein says. He can understand, for example, the unease of New York Democrats at the idea of having George Pataki replace them. "But you know, what you have to say to these people is, 'You'll be dead. Consider the alternatives.'"

Therein lies perhaps the biggest problem. Unsurprisingly, most lawmakers are less than eager to contemplate their own violent demise. "To the degree that they've been willing to grapple with the dangers," Ornstein says, "their attitude is that what you have to prepare for is to make sure you can evacuate in the case of an emergency. They don't even think that the worst-case scenario is that they're all dead." Ornstein acknowledges that there's something a bit creepy about discussing the repercussions of mass slaughter in the chilly, bloodless terms of constitutional law, but he maintains that the issue is too important to ignore. "Think of a couple with small children," he says. "They go off together on some dangerous trip, without any resolution of custody issues. They basically say, 'Aw, everybody will sort it out—even though I've got a sister who will take it to court because she doesn't like my in-laws. It'll work out.' We would look at those people and say, 'How irresponsible can you get? That's *really* dumb.'" ■

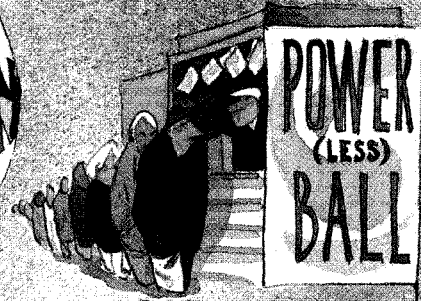
Michelle Cottle is a senior editor of The New Republic.

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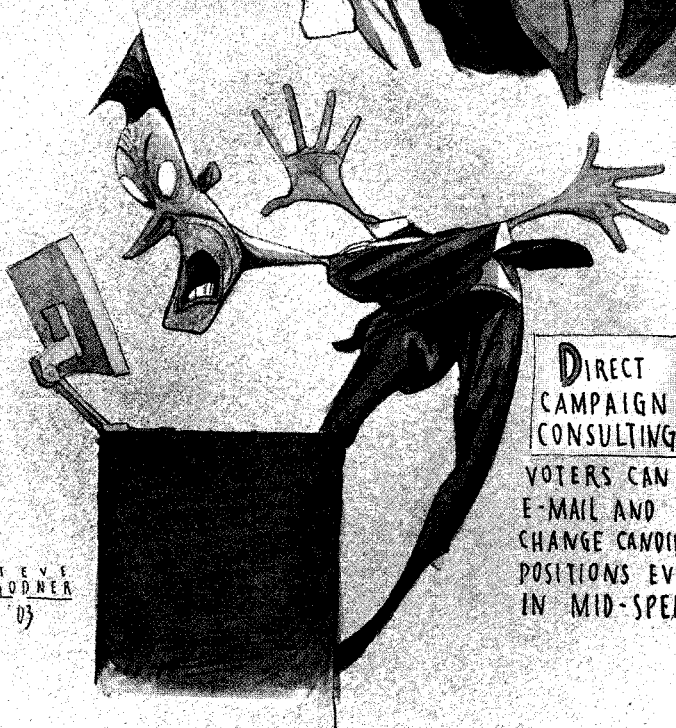
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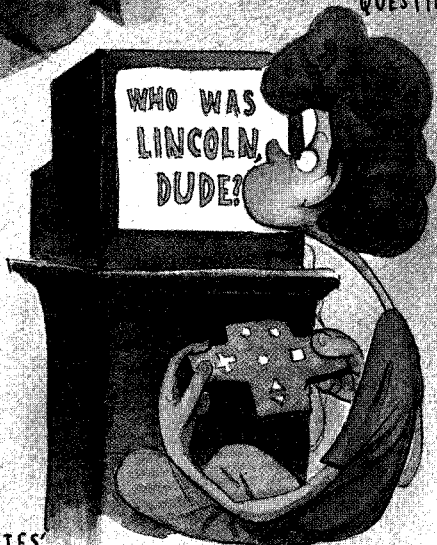
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PRIMARY SOURCES

Selections from reports, studies, and other documents. This month: 39,842 box cutters; gays in the (wartime) military; how college basketball hurts U.S. productivity; the most dangerous country in the world

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

After Saddam

A monograph recently published by the Strategic Studies Institute of the Army War College lays out in comprehensive detail the many obstacles that will confront coalition forces after presumed military victory in Iraq. Written by Conrad C. Crane, the director of the U.S. Army Military History Institute, and W. Andrew Terrill, the SSI's Middle East specialist, the report points out that U.S. forces will have to prevent Sunnis from fighting Shiites, secular Iraqis from fighting religious ones, returned Iraqi exiles from fighting non-exiles, Kurds from fighting Turkomans or establishing an independent state, tribes within all these groups from fighting one another, Turkey from invading from the north, Iran from invading from the east, and the defeated Iraqi army—which may be the only national institution that can keep the country from being ripped apart—from dissolving. All that (the easy part) is merely a prelude to the hard work of nation-building. Crane and Terrill also seek lessons from America's previous post-conflict occupation efforts. They explain, for example, what the de-Nazification of Germany can teach us as we attempt the de-Baathification of Iraq, and make plain the folly of analogies between the occupation of Iraq and the occupation of Japan. The report includes, as an appendix, a "mission matrix for Iraq": a list of 135 tasks that must be accomplished, including securing weapons of mass destruction, training a new Iraqi army, stabilizing the currency, training indigenous lawyers to work in new courts, and operating orphanages.

—"Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario" Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College

The Ally of Evil

Iraq aside, what country poses the greatest threat to American national se-

curity? North Korea? Iran? Syria? According to a recent report by the Cato Institute, it's Pakistan, our "frontline ally" in the war on terror. Whereas no one has yet demonstrated compelling evidence of a connection between Iraq and al Qaeda, Pakistan is known to be al Qaeda's new command center. Whereas Iran has funded the terrorist group Hizbollah, Pakistan is home to al Qaeda's leadership, and a number of terrorist groups—such as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and others—have "powerful links" to Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies. And whereas North Korea will soon have perhaps two nuclear missiles, Pakistan may already have nearly fifty, and the material necessary to build an arsenal of 100. (Pakistan is also known to have provided nuclear technology to North Korea, even after 9/11.) The Bush Administration has ignored all of this since Pakistan's leader, General Pervez Musharraf, has been cooperating in the war on terror. But Pakistani cooperation is less than complete: After 9/11 Pakistan failed to seal its border with Afghanistan, allowing many Taliban and al Qaeda leaders to escape U.S. forces. Worse, there have been reports that Pakistani officials have actively sought to mislead U.S. intelligence in order to protect al Qaeda operatives on Pakistani soil, and the government sent two Pakistani nuclear scientists to Myanmar after 9/11, evidently to avoid questioning by the CIA about nuclear information they may have given directly to Osama bin Laden. To make matters worse, Pakistan is not stable: Musharraf is seen by many Pakistanis as an American puppet, and any moment of weakness could leave him vulnerable to a coup by militant Islamic leaders. This could "instantly transfer control of Pakistan's nuclear assets to a new regime with unknown intentions."

—"Extremist, Nuclear Pakistan: An Emerging Threat?" Cato Institute

The Palestinian Economy

Since the second intifada began, in September of 2000, the Palestinian economy has lost \$5.4 billion in gross income—the equivalent of the region's total income for all of 1999. In recent years the poverty rate among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza has increased from 25 to 60 percent, and the unemployment rate from 23 to 45 percent; employed Palestinians currently average eighteen nonworking dependents each. The Palestinian government is on the verge of financial collapse, and survives only on the strength of donations from abroad. The primary reason for these economic travails is "closure"—the Israeli policy, undertaken in response to ongoing Palestinian terrorist attacks, of restricting the movement (through border controls and curfews) of Palestinian goods and people across borders and within the West Bank and Gaza. Remarkably, according to a report from the World Bank, Palestinians have managed, by lending and sharing, to absorb "levels of unemployment that would have torn the social fabric of many other societies." But as both the World Bank report and a similar report from the United Nations make clear, if Israel and the Palestinians cannot soon reach an agreement that would lift the closures and curfews, the territories could decay beyond economic repair.

—"Two Years of *Intifada*, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis: An Assessment" World Bank

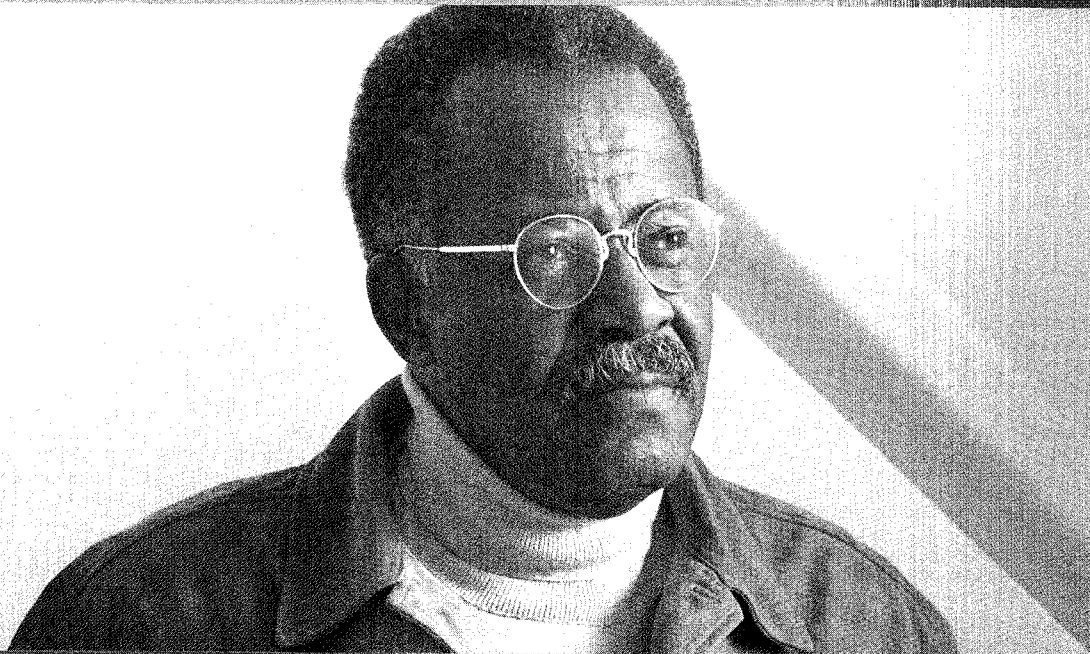
—"The Impact of Closure and other Mobility Restrictions on Palestinian Productive Activities: A Summary" United Nations

THE NATION

Still Asking, Still Telling

In 2002 the U.S. armed forces discharged an average of three lesbian, gay, or bisexual service members every day—a number that will come as a surprise to many, and yet the lowest number of such discharges since 1996. According

I thought diet and exercise were enough to lower my cholesterol. Turned out I needed more.



Now I take my family history of high cholesterol and heart disease a lot more seriously. Because even though I was doing everything right, my cholesterol was still too high, and I had a heart attack. As I was recovering, I asked my doctor about adding ZOCOR. He said ZOCOR, along with a healthy diet and exercise, could really lower cholesterol. And it's working. Now my cholesterol is right where it should be. And so am I.

ZOCOR is an effective medicine that along with diet and exercise can significantly lower total cholesterol. A clinical study among people with high cholesterol and heart disease found 42% fewer deaths from heart attack among those taking ZOCOR.¹ One tablet, taken once a day, can help people with high cholesterol and heart disease live longer, healthier lives.

Important considerations: ZOCOR is a prescription medicine and isn't right for everyone, including women who are nursing or pregnant or who may become pregnant, anyone with liver problems, and people who are allergic to any ingredients of ZOCOR. Unexplained muscle pain or weakness could be a sign of a rare but serious side effect that should be reported to your doctor right away. Your doctor may do blood tests before and during treatment with ZOCOR to check for liver problems. To avoid serious side effects, discuss with your doctor medicine or food that may interact with ZOCOR (see details immediately following this ad).

Ask your doctor if ZOCOR is right for you. For more information and the free *Guide for Managing High Cholesterol*, call 1-888-MERCK-68 or visit zocor.com.

ZOCOR: More than 10 years of experience and 140 million prescriptions filled.

YOUR RESULTS MAY VARY.

PLEASE READ THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT ZOCOR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THIS AD.

1. JAMA. 1994;271:1347-1355. ZOCOR vs 189/2,223 (placebo).

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PLEASE READ THIS SUMMARY CAREFULLY, AND THEN ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT ZOCOR. NO ADVERTISEMENT CAN PROVIDE ALL THE INFORMATION NEEDED TO PRESCRIBE A DRUG. THIS ADVERTISEMENT DOES NOT TAKE THE PLACE OF CAREFUL DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUR DOCTOR. ONLY YOUR DOCTOR HAS THE TRAINING TO WEIGH THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF A PRESCRIPTION DRUG FOR YOU.

USES OF ZOCOR

ZOCOR is a prescription drug that is indicated as an addition to diet for many patients with high cholesterol when diet and exercise are inadequate. For patients with coronary heart disease (CHD) and high cholesterol, ZOCOR is indicated as an addition to diet to reduce the risk of death by reducing coronary death; to reduce the risk of heart attack; to reduce the risk for undergoing cardiac procedures (coronary artery bypass grafting and percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty); and to reduce the risk of stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA).

WHEN ZOCOR SHOULD NOT BE USED

Some people should not take ZOCOR. Discuss this with your doctor.

ZOCOR should not be used by patients who are allergic to any of its ingredients. In addition to the active ingredient simvastatin, each tablet contains the following inactive ingredients: cellulose, lactose, magnesium stearate, iron oxides, talc, titanium dioxide, and starch. Butylated hydroxyanisole is added as a preservative.

Patients with liver problems: ZOCOR should not be used by patients with active liver disease or repeated blood test results indicating possible liver problems. (See WARNINGS.)

Women who are or may become pregnant: Pregnant women should not take ZOCOR because it may harm the fetus. **Women of childbearing age should not take ZOCOR unless it is highly unlikely that they will become pregnant.** If a woman does become pregnant while on ZOCOR, she should stop taking the drug and talk to her doctor at once.

Women who are breast-feeding should not take ZOCOR.

WARNINGS

Muscle: Tell your doctor right away if you experience any unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness at any time during treatment with ZOCOR so your doctor can decide if ZOCOR should be stopped. Some patients may have muscle pain or weakness while taking ZOCOR. Rarely, this can include muscle breakdown resulting in kidney damage. The risk of muscle breakdown is greater in patients taking certain other drugs along with ZOCOR:

- Cyclosporine, itraconazole, ketoconazole, erythromycin, clarithromycin, HIV protease inhibitors, the antidepressant nefazodone, or large quantities of grapefruit juice (>1 quart daily), particularly with higher doses of ZOCOR.
- Gemfibrozil, other fibrates, or lipid-lowering doses (≥ 1 g/day) of niacin, particularly with higher doses of ZOCOR.
- Amiodarone or verapamil with higher doses of ZOCOR.

The risk of muscle breakdown is greater at higher doses of simvastatin.

Because the risk of muscle side effects is greater when ZOCOR is used with the products listed above, the combined use of these products should be avoided unless your doctor determines the benefits are likely to outweigh the increased risks.

If your doctor determines that the benefits of combined use of ZOCOR with gemfibrozil, other fibrates, or niacin likely outweigh the increased risk of muscle problems, the dose of ZOCOR should not exceed 10 mg daily. No more than 10 mg/day of ZOCOR should be taken with cyclosporine.

The combined use of verapamil or amiodarone with doses above ZOCOR 20 mg should be avoided unless your doctor determines the benefits outweigh the increased risk of muscle breakdown.

Your doctor should also carefully monitor for any muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness, particularly during the initial months of therapy and if the dose of either drug is increased. Your doctor also may monitor the level of certain muscle enzymes in your body, but there is no assurance that such monitoring will prevent the occurrence of severe muscle disease.

The risk of muscle breakdown is greater in patients with kidney problems or diabetes.

If you have conditions that can increase your risk of muscle breakdown, which in turn can cause kidney damage, your doctor should temporarily withhold or stop ZOCOR. Also, since there are no known adverse consequences of briefly stopping therapy with ZOCOR, treatment should be stopped a few days before elective major surgery and when any major acute medical or surgical condition occurs. Discuss this with your doctor, who can explain these conditions to you.

Liver: About 1% of patients who took ZOCOR in clinical trials developed elevated levels of some liver enzymes. Patients who had these increases usually had no symptoms. Elevated liver enzymes usually returned to normal levels when therapy with ZOCOR was stopped.

In the ZOCOR Survival Study, the number of patients with more than 1 liver enzyme level elevation to greater than 3 times the normal upper limit was no different between the ZOCOR and placebo groups. Only 8 patients on ZOCOR and 5 on placebo discontinued therapy due to elevated liver enzyme levels. Patients were started on 20 mg of ZOCOR, and one third had their dose raised to 40 mg.

Your doctor should perform routine blood tests to check these enzymes before you start treatment with ZOCOR and periodically thereafter (for example, semiannually) for your first year of treatment or until 1 year after your last elevation in dose. Patients titrated to the 80-mg dose should receive an additional test at 3 months. If your enzyme levels increase, your doctor should order more frequent tests. If your liver enzyme levels remain unusually high, your doctor should discontinue your medication.

Tell your doctor about any liver disease you may have had in the past and about how much alcohol you consume. ZOCOR should be used with caution in patients who consume large amounts of alcohol.

PRECAUTIONS

Before starting treatment with ZOCOR, try to lower your cholesterol by other methods such as diet, exercise, and weight loss. Ask your doctor about how best to do this. Any other medical problems that can cause high cholesterol should also be treated.

Drug Interactions: Because of possible serious drug interactions, it is important to tell your doctor what other drugs you are taking, including those obtained without a prescription. You should also tell other doctors who are prescribing a new medicine for you that you are taking ZOCOR[®] (simvastatin).

ZOCOR can interact with the following:

- Itraconazole
- Ketoconazole
- Erythromycin
- Clarithromycin
- HIV protease inhibitors
- Nefazodone
- Cyclosporine
- Large quantities of grapefruit juice (>1 quart daily)

The risk of myopathy is also increased by the following lipid-lowering drugs that can cause myopathy when given alone:

- Gemfibrozil
- Other fibrates
- Niacin (nicotinic acid) (≥ 1 g/day)

The risk of muscle breakdown is increased with other drugs:

- Amiodarone
- Verapamil

Some patients taking lipid-lowering agents similar to ZOCOR and coumarin anticoagulants (a type of blood thinner) have experienced bleeding and/or increased blood clotting time. Patients taking these medicines should have their blood tested before starting therapy with ZOCOR and should continue to be monitored.

Central Nervous System Toxicity; Cancer, Mutations, Impairment of Fertility: Like most prescription drugs, ZOCOR was required to be tested on animals before it was marketed for human use. Often these tests were designed to achieve higher drug concentrations than humans achieve at recommended dosing. In some tests, the animals had damage to the nerves in the central nervous system. In studies of mice with high doses of ZOCOR, the likelihood of certain types of cancerous tumors increased. No evidence of mutations or of damage to genetic material has been seen. In 1 study with ZOCOR, there was decreased fertility in male rats.

Pregnancy: Pregnant women should not take ZOCOR because it may harm the fetus.

Safety in pregnancy has not been established. In studies with lipid-lowering agents similar to ZOCOR, there have been rare reports of birth defects of the skeleton and digestive system. Therefore, women of childbearing age should not take ZOCOR unless it is highly unlikely they will become pregnant. If a woman does become pregnant while taking ZOCOR, she should stop taking the drug and talk to her doctor at once. The active ingredient of ZOCOR did not cause birth defects in rats at 3 times the human dose or in rabbits at 3 times the human dose.

Nursing Mothers: Drugs taken by nursing mothers may be present in their breast milk. Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, a woman taking ZOCOR should not breast-feed. (See WHEN ZOCOR SHOULD NOT BE USED.)

Pediatric Use: ZOCOR is not recommended for children or patients under 20 years of age.

Geriatric Use: Higher blood levels of active drug were seen in elderly patients (70–78 years of age) compared with younger patients (18–30 years of age) in 1 study. In other studies, the cholesterol-lowering effects of ZOCOR were at least as great in elderly patients as in younger patients, and there were no overall differences in safety between elderly and younger patients over the 20–80 mg/day dosage range.

SIDE EFFECTS

Most patients tolerate treatment with ZOCOR well; however, like all prescription drugs, ZOCOR can cause side effects, and some of them can be serious. Side effects that do occur are usually mild and short-lived. Only your doctor can weigh the risks versus the benefits of any prescription drug. In clinical studies with ZOCOR, less than 1.5% of patients dropped out of the studies because of side effects. In a large, long-term study, patients taking ZOCOR experienced similar side effects to those patients taking placebo (sugar pills). Some of the side effects that have been reported with ZOCOR or related drugs are listed below. This list is not complete. Be sure to ask your doctor about side effects before taking ZOCOR and to discuss any side effects that occur.

Digestive System: Constipation, diarrhea, upset stomach, gas, heartburn, stomach pain/cramps, anorexia, loss of appetite, nausea, inflammation of the pancreas, hepatitis, jaundice, fatty changes in the liver, and, rarely, severe liver damage and failure, cirrhosis, and liver cancer.

Muscle, Skeletal: Muscle cramps, aches, pain, and weakness; joint pain; muscle breakdown.

Nervous System: Dizziness, headache, insomnia, tingling, memory loss, damage to nerves causing weakness and/or loss of sensation and/or abnormal sensations, anxiety, depression, tremor, loss of balance, psychotic disturbances.

Skin: Rash, itching, hair loss, dryness, nodules, discoloration.

Eye/Senses: Blurred vision, altered taste sensation, progression of cataracts, eye muscle weakness.

Hypersensitivity (Allergic) Reactions: On rare occasions, a wide variety of symptoms have been reported to occur either alone or together in groups (referred to as a syndrome) that appeared to be based on allergic-type reactions, which may rarely be fatal. These have included 1 or more of the following: a severe generalized reaction that may include shortness of breath, wheezing, digestive symptoms, and low blood pressure and even shock; an allergic reaction with swelling of the face, lips, tongue, and/or throat with difficulty swallowing or breathing; symptoms mimicking lupus (a disorder in which a person's immune system may attack parts of his or her own body); severe muscle and blood vessel inflammation, sometimes including rash; bruises; various disorders of blood cells (that could result in anemia, infection, or blood clotting problems) or abnormal blood tests; inflamed or painful joints; hives; fatigue and weakness; sensitivity to sunlight; fever, chills; flushing; difficulty breathing; and severe skin disorders that vary from rash to a serious burn-like shedding of skin all over the body, including mucous membranes such as the lining of the mouth.

Other: Loss of sexual desire, breast enlargement, impotence.

Laboratory Tests: Liver function test abnormalities including elevated alkaline phosphatase and bilirubin; thyroid function abnormalities.

NOTE: This summary provides important information about ZOCOR. If you would like more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist to let you read the prescribing information and then discuss it with them.



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to the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network's ninth annual report on the military's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, a primary reason for the decline may be that the armed forces simply can't afford to shed valuable personnel during times of military conflict. (The Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the first Persian Gulf War all coincided with declines in discharges of homosexual personnel.) The report notes, however, that the ongoing war on terror and a looming war with Iraq did not stop the Army last year from discharging seven Arab linguists (although the General Accounting Office has deemed the military to be desperately short of such specialists) when they were discovered to be gay. And until last year, according to the report, the Air Force Reserves were still using a recruiting form that asked applicants, "Are you homosexual or bisexual?" and "Do you intend to engage in homosexual acts?"—clear violations of the don't-ask provision. The report also documents occasions on which military chaplains—whom the military designates (along with defense attorneys) as people homosexual service members *can* tell confidentially about their sexual orientation, and to whom they can report incidents of harassment—have "outed" service members nevertheless.

—"Conduct Unbecoming: The 9th Annual Report on 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'" Servicemembers Legal Defense Network

Check Your Machete

On February 17, 2002, the federal Transportation Security Administration took charge of security at all 429 commercial airports in the country. Over the next thirteen months, according to a recent TSA report, airport screeners confiscated more than 4.8 million dangerous items at security checkpoints. A partial breakdown: 1.4 million knives, 2.4 million other sharp objects (such as scissors), 125,273 incendiary objects (such as butane lighters), 15,666 blunt objects (such as billy clubs, golf clubs, and hammers), and—astonish-

ingly—39,842 box cutters (the type of weapon used by the 9/11 terrorists) and 1,101 guns. Some additional items confiscated by the TSA through February of this year: a fifteen-piece cutlery set; a machete; a trailer hitch; a kitchen sink pipe; a circular saw; and (numerous times, according to a TSA spokesman, Brian Turmail) sharp-edged metal wall hangings depicting Apollo, the Greek god of light, that could become hurled projectiles.

—"Air Travelers' Security Enhanced as TSA Intercepts Over 4.8 Million Prohibited Items"
Transportation Security Administration

SOCIETY

March Madness

The NCAA men's basketball tournament reaches beyond sports fandom and deep into the American workplace through ubiquitous "March Madness" office pools, in which contestants try to predict which team will win each of the sixty-three games. According to a study conducted by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, a Chicago-based outplacement company, if all 36.6 million Americans with a bachelor's degree (workers who have attended college being deemed more likely to follow college basketball) spend ten minutes each day talking about the pool during the fifteen-day tournament, the U.S. economy loses \$1.4 billion. Meanwhile, the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, at the University of Central Florida, has released a report revealing the dismal graduation rates among students on the tournament basketball teams. For five of the 2003 tournament's final sixteen teams the rates were lower by 32 to 49 percent than the overall student-athlete graduation rates at their respective schools. Seven of the sixteen schools graduated fewer than 30 percent of their African-American basketball players. And thirteen schools among the original sixty-four in the tournament have not graduated a single African-American basketball player in six years. (The only school in the tournament with a 100 percent grad-

uation rate among its basketball-playing students over the past six years is Stanford, although Butler University, in Indianapolis, has graduated 100 percent of its African-American players, and 86 percent of all its players, in that time.)

—"At Work, March Madness May Cost \$1.4 Billion!"
Challenger, Gray & Christmas

—"Keeping Score When It Counts: Graduation Rates for 2003 NCAA Division 1 Men's Basketball Championship"
Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport

Homework Deflation

According to a survey of student attitudes by the Higher Education Research Institute, based at the University of California at Los Angeles, only 33 percent of college freshmen—a smaller share than ever before—report having done six or more hours of homework a week during their senior year in high school. And the percentage who said they studied less than one hour a week as seniors has doubled since the question was first asked, in 1987, to 16 percent. Yet the grades they bring to college have improved, evidently as a result of grade inflation. Whereas in 1968 only 17.6 percent of college freshmen reported having earned A averages in high school, today 44.1 percent do. The survey director, Linda Sax, a professor of education at UCLA, says that the decline in study time, at least, may be attributable to the hours students spend using the Internet. Time spent recreationally surfing the Web is clearly displacing time spent studying—but Sax says the Internet may also be helping students to do their homework more efficiently.

—"The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2002"
Higher Education Research Institute

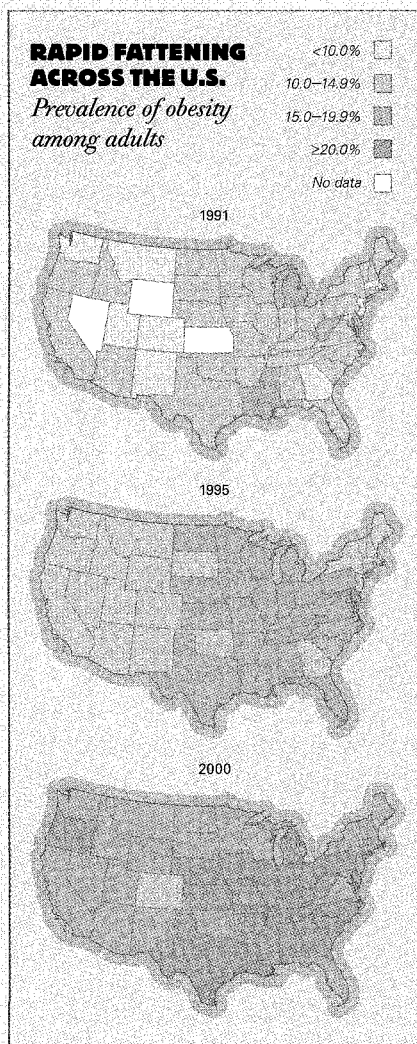
For links to the reports and documents discussed in these pages visit
www.theatlantic.com/issues/2003/06/primarysources.htm

THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD

Obesity may soon surpass both hunger and infectious disease as the world's most pressing public-health problem

In 2000, for the first time in history, the number of overweight people in the world—more than a billion of them, 300 million of whom were obese—matched the number of underweight people. (Obesity is defined as a specific ratio of weight to height: someone standing five foot five, for instance, would be considered obese at 180 pounds or more, whereas someone six feet two would be considered obese at 233 pounds or more.)

The United States contains more fat people—by a large margin—than any other nation. Sixty-four percent of American adults are overweight,



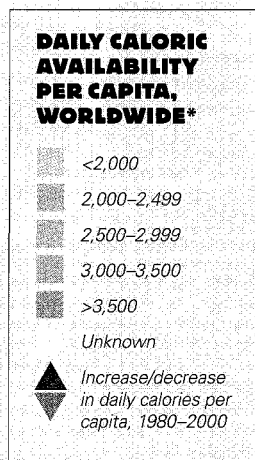
versus 47 percent in 1980. Some nine million Americans are now “morbidly obese,” meaning roughly a hundred pounds or more overweight, and weight-related conditions cause about 300,000 premature deaths a year in this country—more than anything else except smoking.

Yet, surprisingly, health problems associated with obesity may be more severe in poor countries than in the United States, according to a recent World Health Organization report, in part because such countries lack the resources to treat diabetes, heart disease, and other frequently fatal illnesses linked to excess weight. Another WHO study notes that although both hunger and infectious disease remain major problems, particularly in some regions, obesity will soon surpass them as the most severe public-health problem facing the world as a whole.

The extent of global obesity is striking, as the map above suggests. For instance, 71 percent of women in Egypt are overweight or obese. Even in countries that are still struggling to feed many of their people, unhealthy weight gain is increasing; 15 percent of Kenyan women and 26 percent of Zimbabwean women are overweight.

THE LAND OF PLENTY

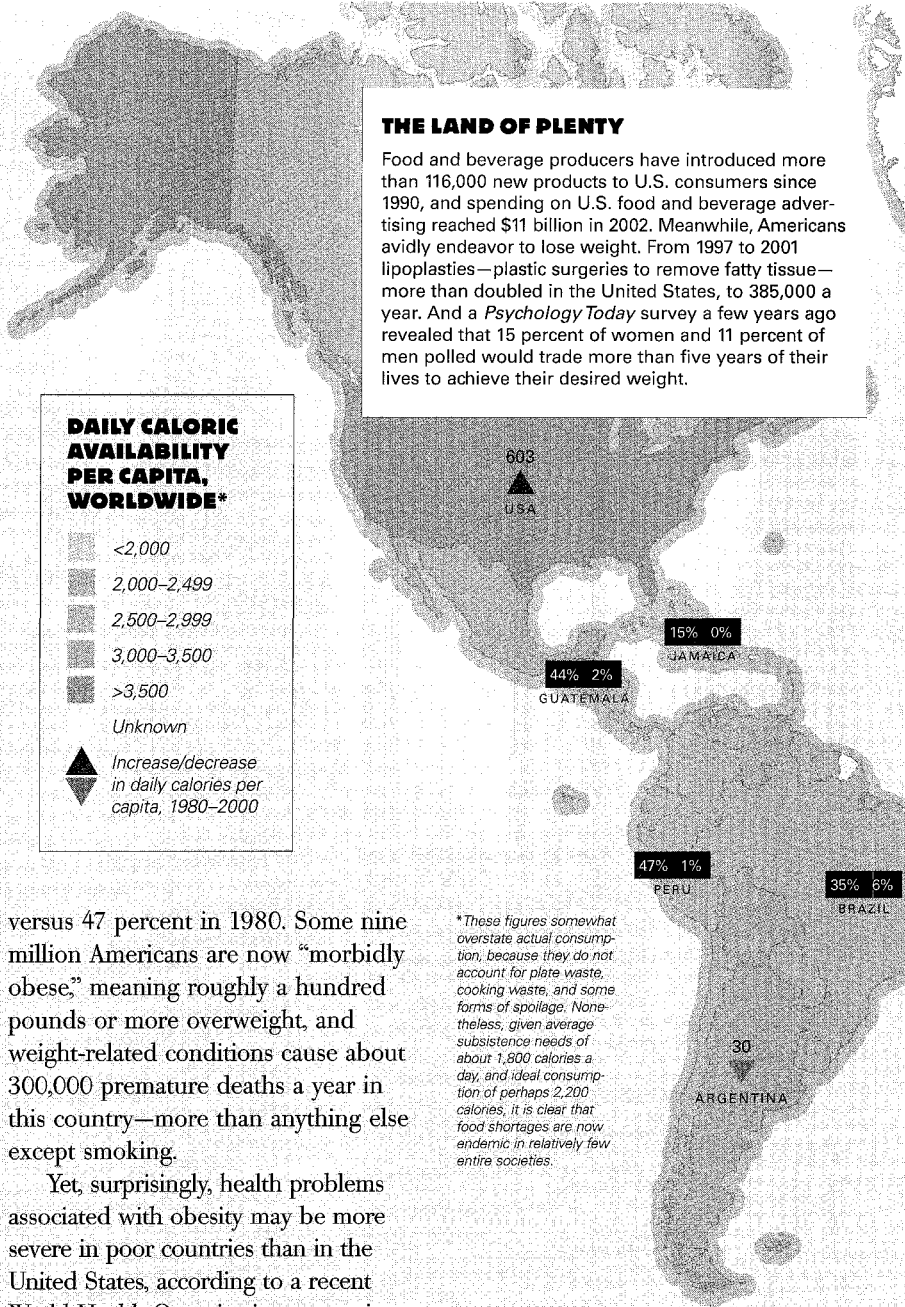
Food and beverage producers have introduced more than 116,000 new products to U.S. consumers since 1990, and spending on U.S. food and beverage advertising reached \$11 billion in 2002. Meanwhile, Americans avidly endeavor to lose weight. From 1997 to 2001 lipoplasties—plastic surgeries to remove fatty tissue—more than doubled in the United States, to 385,000 a year. And a *Psychology Today* survey a few years ago revealed that 15 percent of women and 11 percent of men polled would trade more than five years of their lives to achieve their desired weight.



*These figures somewhat overstate actual consumption, because they do not account for plate waste, cooking waste, and some forms of spoilage. Nonetheless, given average subsistence needs of about 1,800 calories a day, and ideal consumption of perhaps 2,200 calories, it is clear that food shortages are now endemic in relatively few entire societies.

(Corresponding figures for men are typically higher.) Childhood obesity rates in many developing countries are rapidly converging with those seen in this country. In China, for example, childhood obesity—a phenomenon unknown in previous generations—has risen as high as 13 percent in urban areas. Twenty-nine percent of urban Chinese children are overweight.

What accounts for such rapid gains in weight worldwide? Declining physical activity has undoubtedly played a role, but greater food availability and changing eating habits have probably played larger ones. In the United States families now eat fewer home-cooked meals, which tend to have

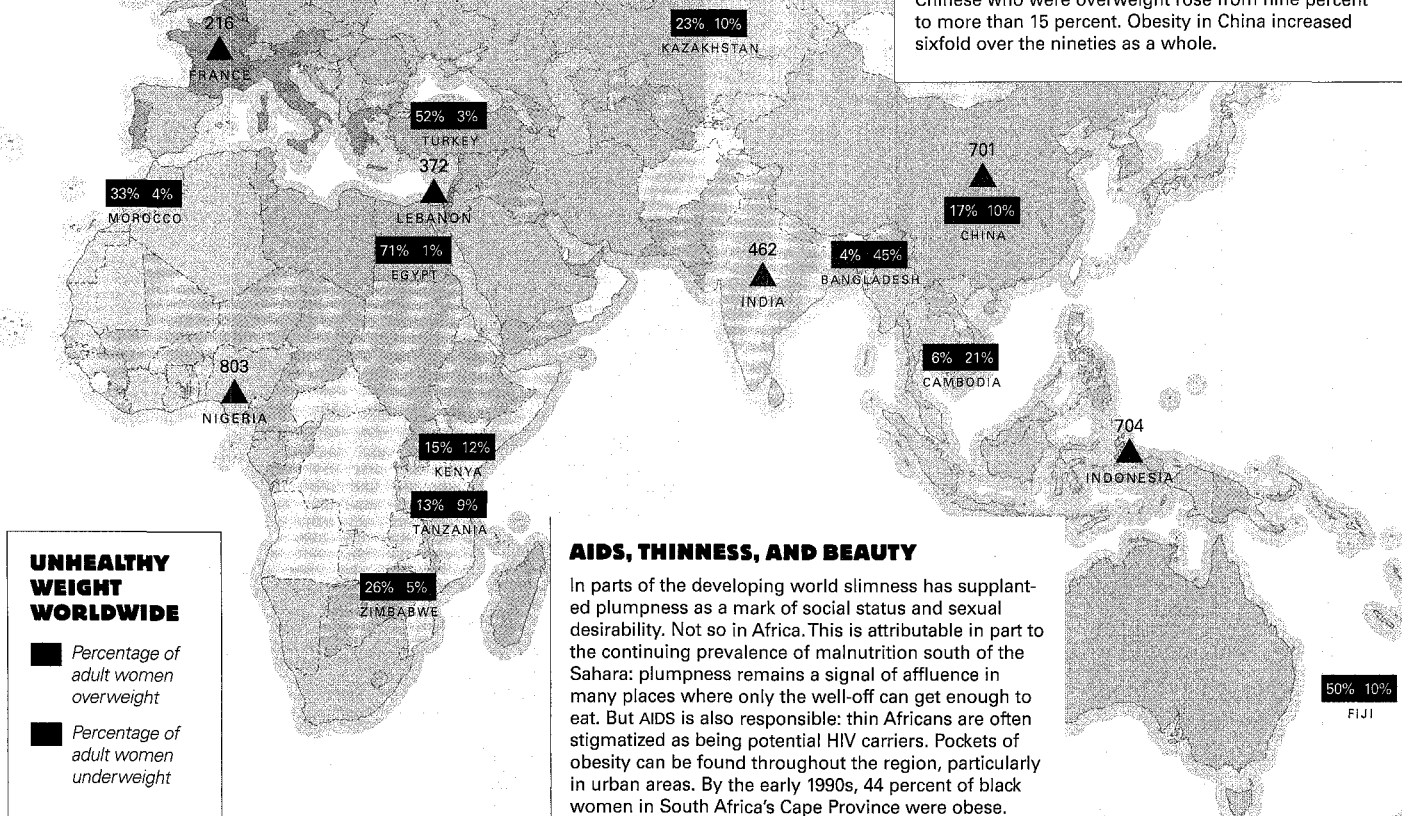


WHY ARE THE FRENCH SLIMMER THAN AMERICANS?

The simplest answer is that *foie gras* notwithstanding, Americans eat more than the French do—about 200 calories a day more. And although the French aversion to exercise is well known, Americans are probably more sedentary in their daily lives: suburban sprawl and lower gasoline prices may induce them to drive where the French might walk. The greater variety of TV channels in the United States may also lead to more time spent on the sofa.

THE PROBLEM WITH CHINESE FOOD

As incomes in China have risen over the past two decades, hundreds of millions of Chinese have dramatically changed their diet, switching from starchy roots, plain rice, and salted vegetables to dishes that are staples of American-based Chinese restaurants, such as pork or other meats fried in oil. In the period 1989–1993 alone the share of Chinese households deriving more than 30 percent of their calories from fat rose from 20 percent to 51 percent. During this period the share of Chinese who were overweight rose from nine percent to more than 15 percent. Obesity in China increased sixfold over the nineties as a whole.



AIDS, THINNESS, AND BEAUTY

In parts of the developing world slimness has supplanted plumpness as a mark of social status and sexual desirability. Not so in Africa. This is attributable in part to the continuing prevalence of malnutrition south of the Sahara: plumpness remains a signal of affluence in many places where only the well-off can get enough to eat. But AIDS is also responsible: thin Africans are often stigmatized as being potential HIV carriers. Pockets of obesity can be found throughout the region, particularly in urban areas. By the early 1990s, 44 percent of black women in South Africa's Cape Province were obese.

about half as many calories as restaurant or takeout meals. This shift has driven perhaps two thirds of the country's weight gain since 1980. And in developing countries increased dietary fat—largely attributable to the spread of cheap, high-quality cooking oil—has helped to raise daily caloric intake by an average of 400 calories per capita since 1980. As the map above indicates, people in the vast majority of countries now have access to an average of more than 2,500 calories a day.

Until recently frequent food shortages may have masked a genetic vulnerability to obesity that is carried by a significant share of the world's people—perhaps billions of them. The evidence is most striking in Pacific Islanders, Central Asians, and other populations that have seen food availability rise to

near-Western levels in recent years and are now experiencing rates of obesity as high as 80 percent. And in any population, whatever its genetic predisposition, malnutrition during gestation heightens the risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease during adulthood; it may be that when fetuses are undernourished, they are “programmed” to overeat during times of abundance, storing fat for presumed lean times ahead. Many of the world's people were conceived and brought to term in a very lean era yet now face a wealth of affordable, high-fat food—meaning that untold children may avoid starvation and diseases related to poverty only to die early from diabetes, heart disease, or other “diseases of affluence.”

Obesity is often discussed as an American cultural phenomenon, closely

intertwined with a taste for fast food, soft drinks, television, and video games. But it is more accurately seen as a broader economic phenomenon, its growth driven by such changes as cheaper food, urbanization (less walking and agricultural work), the increasing prevalence of desk jobs, and the delegation of food preparation to professionals who—whether gourmet chefs or fast-food executives—are skilled at making food taste good, and making us want more of it. None of these trends has run its course (in fact, the biggest cause of increased obesity in the United States recently—the decline of home cooking—has yet to become a major factor in most of the world). Overall, obesity looks like an epidemic still in its infancy. Its worst consequences are yet to come. —DON PECK

THE LOGIC OF SUICIDE TERRORISM

First you feel nervous about riding the bus. Then you wonder about going to a mall. Then you think twice about sitting for long at your favorite café. Then nowhere seems safe. Terrorist groups have a strategy—to shrink to nothing the areas in which people move freely—and suicide bombers, inexpensive and reliably lethal, are their latest weapons. Israel has learned to recognize and disrupt the steps on the path to suicide attacks. We must learn too

BY BRUCE HOFFMAN

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Nearly everywhere in the world it is taken for granted that one can simply push open the door to a restaurant, café, or bar, sit down, and order a meal or a drink. In Israel the process of entering such a place is more complicated. One often encounters an armed guard who, in addition to asking prospective patrons whether they themselves are armed, may quickly pat them down, feeling for the telltale bulge of a belt or a vest containing explosives. Establishments that cannot afford a guard or are unwilling to pass on the cost of one to customers simply keep their doors locked, responding to knocks with a quick glance through the glass and an instant judgment as to whether this or that person can safely be admitted. What would have been unimaginable a year ago is now not only routine but reassuring. It has become the price of a redefined normality.

In the United States in the twenty months since 9/11 we, too, have had to become accustomed to an array of new, often previously inconceivable security measures—in airports and other transportation hubs, hotels and office buildings, sports stadiums and concert halls. Although some are more noticeable and perhaps more inconvenient than others, the fact remains that they have redefined our own sense of normality. They are accepted because we feel more vulnerable than before. With every new threat to international security we become more willing to live with stringent precautions and reflexive, almost unconscious wariness. With every new threat, that is, our everyday life becomes more like Israel's.

The situation in Israel, where last year's intensified suicide-bombing campaign changed the national mood and people's personal politics, is not analogous to that in the United States today. But the organization and the operations of the suicide bombers are neither limited to Israel and its conflict with

the Palestinians nor unique to its geostrategic position. The fundamental characteristics of suicide bombing, and its strong attraction for the terrorist organizations behind it, are universal: Suicide bombings are inexpensive and effective. They are less complicated and compromising than other kinds of terrorist operations. They guarantee media coverage. The suicide terrorist is the ultimate smart bomb. Perhaps most important, coldly efficient bombings tear at the fabric of trust that holds societies together. All these reasons doubtless account for the spread of suicide terrorism from the Middle East to Sri Lanka and Turkey, Argentina and Chechnya, Russia and Algeria—and to the United States.

To understand the power that suicide terrorism can have over a populace—and what a populace can do to counter it—one naturally goes to the society that has been most deeply affected. As a researcher who has studied the strategies of terrorism for more than twenty-five years, I recently visited Israel to review the steps the military, the police, and the intelligence and security services have taken against a threat more pervasive and personal than ever before.

I was looking at x-rays with Dr. Shmuel Shapira in his office at Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital. "This is not a place to have a wristwatch," he said as he described the injuries of a young girl who'd been on her way to school one morning last November when a suicide terrorist detonated a bomb on her bus. Eleven of her fellow passengers were killed, and more than fifty others wounded. The blast was so powerful that the hands and case of the bomber's wristwatch had turned into lethal projectiles, lodging in the girl's neck and ripping a major artery. The presence of such foreign objects in the bodies of his patients no longer surprises Shapira. "We have cases with a nail in the neck, or nuts and bolts in the thigh ... a ball bearing in the skull," he said.

X-RAY COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RADIOLOGY AND THE TRAUMA UNIT, THE HILLEL YAFFE MEDICAL CENTER, HADERA, ISRAEL

*Survivor of a nail-bomb
suicide attack in Israel, 2002*

20 cm

Such are the weapons of war in Israel today: nuts and bolts, screws and ball bearings, any metal shards or odd bits of broken machinery that can be packed together with homemade explosive and then strapped to the body of a terrorist dispatched to any place where people gather—bus, train, restaurant, café, supermarket, shopping mall, street corner, promenade. These attacks probably cost no more than \$150 to mount, and they need no escape plan—often the most difficult aspect of a terrorist operation. And they are reliably deadly. According to data from the Rand Corporation's chronology of international terrorism incidents, suicide attacks on average kill four times as many people as other terrorist acts. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that this means of terror has become increasingly popular. The tactic first emerged in Lebanon, in 1983; a decade later it came to Israel, and it has been a regular security problem ever since. Fully two thirds of all such incidents in Israel have occurred in the past two and a half years—that is, since the start of the second intifada, in September of 2000. Indeed, suicide bombers are responsible for almost half of the approximately 750 deaths in terrorist attacks since then.

Last December, I walked through Jerusalem with two police officers, one of them a senior operational commander,

young, married and unmarried, and some of them have children. Some of them, too, are women, and word has it that even children are being trained for martyrdom. "There is no clear profile anymore—not for terrorists and especially not for suicide bombers," an exasperated senior officer in the Israel Defense Forces told me last year. Sometimes the bombers disguise themselves: male *shaheed* (Arabic for "martyrs") have worn green IDF fatigues; have dressed as *haredim* (ultra-Orthodox Jews), complete with yarmulkes and tzitzit, the fringes that devout Jews display as part of their everyday clothing; or have donned long-haired wigs in an effort to look like hip Israelis rather than threatening Arabs. A few women have tried to camouflage bombs by strapping them to their stomachs to fake pregnancy. And contrary to popular belief, the bombers are not drawn exclusively from the ranks of the poor but have included two sons of millionaires. (Most of the September 11 terrorists came from comfortable middle- to upper-middle-class families and were well educated.) The Israeli journalist Ronni Shaked, an expert on the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, who writes for *Yedioth Ahronoth*, an Israeli daily, has debunked the myth that it is only people with no means of improving their lot in life who turn to suicide terrorism. "All leaders of Hamas," he told me, "are university graduates,

Winter and summer are the better seasons for bombing buses in Jerusalem, because the closed windows (for heat or air-conditioning) intensify the force of the blast, maximizing the bombs' killing potential.

who were showing me the sites of suicide bombings in recent years. They described the first major suicide-terrorist attack in the city, which occurred in February of 1996, early on a Sunday morning—the beginning of the Israeli work week. The driver of the No. 18 Egged bus was hurrying across a busy intersection at Sarei Yisrael Street as a yellow light turned red. The bus was about halfway through when an explosion transformed it into an inferno of twisted metal, pulverized glass, and burning flesh. A traffic camera designed to catch drivers running stop lights captured the scene on film. Twenty-five people were killed, including two U.S. citizens, and eighty were wounded.

The early years of suicide terrorism were a simpler time, the officers explained. Suicide bombers were—at least in theory—easier to spot then. They tended to carry their bombs in nylon backpacks or duffel bags rather than in belts or vests concealed beneath their clothing, as they do now. They were also typically male, aged seventeen to twenty-three, and unmarried. Armed with these data, the authorities could simply deny work permits to Palestinians most likely to be suicide bombers, thus restricting their ability to cross the Green Line (Israel's pre-1967 border) into Israel proper from the West Bank or the Gaza Strip.

Today, though, suicide bombers are middle-aged and

some with master's degrees. This is a movement not of poor, miserable people but of highly educated people who are using [the image of] poverty to make the movement more powerful."

Buses remain among the bombers' preferred targets. Winter and summer are the better seasons for bombing buses in Jerusalem, because the closed windows (for heat or air-conditioning) intensify the force of the blast, maximizing the bombs' killing potential. As a hail of shrapnel pierces flesh and breaks bones, the shock wave tears lungs and crushes other internal organs. When the bus's fuel tank explodes, a fireball causes burns, and smoke inhalation causes respiratory damage. All this is a significant return on a relatively modest investment. Two or three kilograms of explosive on a bus can kill as many people as twenty to thirty kilograms left on a street or in a mall or a restaurant. But as security on buses has improved, and passengers have become more alert, the bombers have been forced to seek other targets.

The terrorists are lethally flexible and inventive. A person wearing a bomb is far more dangerous and far more difficult to defend against than a timed device left to explode in a marketplace. This human weapons system can effect last-minute changes based on the ease of approach,

the paucity or density of people, and the security measures in evidence. On a Thursday afternoon in March of last year a reportedly smiling, self-satisfied bomber strolled down King George Street, in the heart of Jerusalem, looking for just the right target. He found it in a crowd of shoppers gathered in front of the trendy Aroma Café, near the corner of Agrippas Street. In a fusillade of nails and other bits of metal two victims were killed and fifty-six wounded. Similarly, in April of last year a female suicide bomber tried to enter the Mahane Yehuda open-air market—the fourth woman to make such an attempt in four months—but was deterred by a strong police presence. So she simply walked up to a bus stop packed with shoppers hurrying home before the Sabbath and detonated her explosives, killing six and wounding seventy-three.

Suicide bombing initially seemed the desperate act of lone individuals, but it is not undertaken alone. Invariably, a terrorist organization such as Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement), the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), or the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade has recruited the bomber, conducted reconnaissance, prepared the explosive device, and identified a target—explaining that if it turns out to be guarded or protected, any crowded place nearby will do. “We hardly ever find that the suicide bomber came by himself,” a police officer explained to me. “There is always a handler.” In fact, in some cases a handler has used a cell phone or other device to trigger the blast from a distance. A policeman told me, “There was one event where a suicide bomber had been told all he had to do was to carry the bomb and plant explosives in a certain place. But the bomb was remote-control detonated.”

The organizations behind the Palestinians’ suicide terrorism have numerous components. Quartermasters obtain the explosives and the other materials (nuts, bolts, nails, and the like) that are combined to make a bomb. Now that bomb-making methods have been so widely disseminated throughout the West Bank and Gaza, a merely competent technician, rather than the skilled engineer once required, can build a bomb. Explosive material is packed into pockets sewn into a canvas or denim belt or vest and hooked up to a detonator—usually involving a simple hand-operated plunger.

Before the operation is to be launched, “minders” sequester the bomber in a safe house, isolating him or her from family and friends—from all contact with the outside world—during the final preparations for martyrdom. A film crew makes a martyrdom video, as much to help ensure that the bomber can’t back out as for propaganda and recruitment purposes. Reconnaissance teams have already either scouted the target or received detailed information about it, which they pass on to the bomber’s handlers. The job of the handlers, who are highly skilled at avoiding Israeli army checkpoints or police patrols, is to deliver the bomber as close to the target as possible.

I talked to a senior police-operations commander in his office at the Russian Compound, the nerve center of law enforcement for Jerusalem since the time when first the Turks and then the British ruled this part of the world. It was easy to imagine, amid the graceful arches and the traditional Jerusalem stone, an era when Jerusalem’s law-enforcement officers wore tarbooshes and pressed blue tunics with Sam Browne belts rather than the bland polyester uniforms and blue baseball-style caps of today. Although policing this multi-faith, historically beleaguered city has doubtless always involved difficult challenges, none can compare with the current situation. “This year there were very many events,” my host explained, using the bland generic noun that signifies terrorist attacks or attempted attacks. “In previous years we considered ten events as normal; now we are already at forty-three.” He sighed. There were still three weeks to go before the end of the year. Nineteen of these events had been suicide bombings. In the calculus of terrorism, it doesn’t get much better. “How easy it has become for a person to wake up in the morning and go off and commit suicide,” he observed. Once there were only “bags on buses, not vests or belts” to contend with, the policeman said. “Everything is open now. The purpose is to prove that the police can do whatever they want but it won’t help.”

This, of course, is the age-old strategy of terrorists everywhere—to undermine public confidence in the ability of the authorities to protect and defend citizens, thereby creating a climate of fear and intimidation amenable to terrorist exploitation. In Jerusalem, and in Israel as a whole, this strategy has not succeeded. But it has fundamentally changed daily behavior patterns—the first step toward crushing morale and breaking the will to resist.

The terrorists appear to be deliberately homing in on the few remaining places where Israelis thought they could socialize in peace. An unprecedented string of attacks in the first four months of last year illustrated this careful strategy, beginning at bus stops and malls and moving into more private realms, such as corner supermarkets and local coffee bars. In March, for example, no one paid much attention to a young man dressed like an ultra-Orthodox Jew who was standing near some parked cars as guests left a bar mitzvah celebration at a social hall in the ultra-Orthodox Jerusalem neighborhood of Beit Yisrael. Then he blew himself up, killing nine people, eight of them children, and wounding fifty-nine. The tight-knit religious community had felt that it was protected by God, pointing to the miraculous lack of injury a year before when a booby-trapped car blew up in front of the same hall. Using a strategy al Qaeda has made familiar, the terrorists revisited the site.

Less than a month after the Beit Yisrael attack the suicide bombers and their leaders drove home the point that Israelis cannot feel safe anywhere by going to the one large Israeli city that had felt immune from the suspicion and antipathy prevalent elsewhere—Haifa, with its successful mixture of

Jews, Christian and Muslim Arabs, and followers of the Bahai faith. The University of Haifa has long had the highest proportion of Arab students of any Israeli university. The nearby Matza restaurant, owned by Jews but run by an Israeli Arab family from Galilee, seemed to embody the unusually cordial relations that exist among the city's diverse communities. Matza was popular with Jews and Arabs alike, and the presence of its Arab staff and patrons provided a feeling of safety from attack. That feeling was shattered at two-thirty on a quiet Sunday afternoon, when a suicide bomber killed fifteen people and wounded nearly fifty.

As we had tea late one afternoon in the regal though almost preternaturally quiet surroundings of Jerusalem's King David Hotel, Benny Morris, a professor of history at Ben Gurion University, explained, "The Palestinians say they have found a strategic weapon, and suicide bombing is it. This hotel is empty. The streets are empty. They have effectively terrorized Israeli society. My wife won't use a bus anymore, only a taxi." It is undeniable that daily life in Jerusalem, and throughout Israel, has changed as a result of last year's wave of suicide bombings. Even the police have been affected. "I'm worried," one officer told me in an aside—whether in confidence or in

Pedahzur, a professor of political science at Haifa University and an expert on political extremism and violence who manages the National Security Studies Center's terrorism database. As the French philosopher Gaston Bouthoul argued three decades ago in a theoretical treatise on the subject, the "anonymous, unidentifiable threat creates huge anxiety, and the terrorist tries to spread fear by contagion, to immobilise and subjugate those living under this threat." This is precisely what the Palestinian terrorist groups are trying to achieve. "The Israelis ... will fall to their knees," Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, said in 2001. "You can sense the fear in Israel already; they are worried about where and when the next attacks will come. Ultimately, Hamas will win." The strategy of suicide terrorists is to make people paranoid and xenophobic, fearful of venturing beyond their homes even to a convenience store. Terrorists hope to compel the enemy society's acquiescence, if not outright surrender, to their demands. This is what al Qaeda hoped to achieve on 9/11 in one stunning blow—and what the Palestinians seek as well, on a more sustained, if piecemeal, basis.

After decades of struggle the Palestinians are convinced that they have finally discovered Israel's Achilles' heel. Ismail Haniya, another Hamas leader, was quoted in March of last

The terrorists appear to be deliberately homing in on the few remaining places where Israelis thought they could socialize in peace. An unprecedented string of attacks in the first four months of last year illustrated this careful strategy.

embarrassment, I couldn't tell—as we walked past Zion Square, near where some bombs had exploded. "I tell you this as a police officer. I don't come to Jerusalem with my children anymore. I'd give back the settlements. I'd give over my bank account to live in peace."

By any measure 2002 was an astonishing year for Israel in terms of suicide bombings. An average of five attacks a month were made, nearly double the number during the first fifteen months of the second intifada—and that number was itself more than ten times the monthly average since 1993. Indeed, according to a database maintained by the National Security Studies Center, at Haifa University, there were nearly as many suicide attacks in Israel last year (fifty-nine) as there had been in the previous eight years combined (sixty-two). In Jerusalem alone there were nine suicide attacks during the first four months of 2002, killing thirty-three and injuring 464. "It was horrendous," a young professional woman living in the city told me. "No one went out for coffee. No one went out to restaurants. We went as a group of people to one another's houses only."

Again, terrorism is meant to produce psychological effects that reach far beyond the immediate victims of the attack. "The Scuds of Saddam [in 1991] never caused as much psychological damage as the suicide bombers have," says Ami

year in *The Washington Post* as saying that Jews "love life more than any other people, and they prefer not to die." In contrast, suicide terrorists are often said to have gone to their deaths smiling. An Israeli policeman told me, "A suicide bomber goes on a bus and finds himself face-to-face with victims and he smiles and he activates the bomb—but we learned that only by asking people afterwards who survived." This is what is known in the Shia Islamic tradition as the *bassamat al-farah*, or "smile of joy"—prompted by one's impending martyrdom. It is just as prevalent among Sunni terrorists. (Indeed, the last will and testament of Mohammed Atta, the ringleader of the September 11 hijackers, and his "primer" for martyrs, *The Sky Smiles, My Young Son*, clearly evidence a belief in the joy of death.)

This perceived weakness of an ostensibly powerful society has given rise to what is known in the Middle East as the "spider-web theory," which originated within Hizbollah, the Lebanese Shia organization, following a struggle that ultimately compelled the Israel Defense Forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon in May of 2000. The term is said to have been coined by Hizbollah's secretary general, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who described Israel as a still formidable military power whose civil society had become materialistic and lazy, its citizens self-satisfied, comfortable, and pampered

to the point where they had gone soft. IDF Chief of Staff Moshe “Boogie” Ya’alon paraphrased Nasrallah for the Israeli public in an interview published in the newspaper *Ha’aretz* last August.

“The Israeli army is strong, Israel has technological superiority and is said to have strategic capabilities, but its citizens are unwilling any longer to sacrifice lives in order to defend their national interests and national goals. Therefore, Israel is a spider-web society: it looks strong from the outside, but touch it and it will fall apart.”

Al Qaeda, of course, has made a similar assessment of America’s vulnerability.

A society facing such a determined foe can respond. Israel, with its necessarily advanced military and intelligence capacities, was able in the first four months of last year to meet the most concerted effort to date by Palestinian terrorists to test the resolve of its government and the mettle of its citizens. Twelve Israelis were killed in terrorist attacks in January, twenty-six in February, 108 in March, and forty-one in April. The population of the United States is roughly forty-seven times that of Israel, meaning that the American equivalent of the March figure would have exceeded 5,000—another 9/11, but with more than 2,000 additional deaths. After April of 2002, however, a period of relative quiet settled over Israel. The number of suicide attacks, according to the National Security Studies Center, declined from sixteen in March to six in April, six in May, five in June, and six in July before falling still further to two in August and similarly small numbers for the remainder of the year. “We wouldn’t want it to be perceived [by the Israeli population] that we have no military answers,” a senior IDF planner told me. The military answer was Operation Defensive Shield, which began in March and involved both the IDF’s huge deployment of personnel to the West Bank and its continuing presence in all the major Palestinian population centers that Israel regards as wellsprings of the suicide campaign. This presence has involved aggressive military operations to pre-empt suicide bombing, along with curfews and other restrictions on the movement of residents.

The success of the IDF’s strategy is utterly dependent on regularly acquiring intelligence and rapidly disseminating it to operational units that can take appropriate action. Thus the IDF must continue to occupy the West Bank’s major population centers, so that Israeli intelligence agents can stay in close—and relatively safe—proximity to their information sources, and troops can act immediately either to round up suspects or to rescue the agent should an operation go awry. “Military pressure facilitates arrests, because you’re there,” one knowledgeable observer explained to me. “Not only do you know the area, but you have [covert] spotters deployed, and the whole area is under curfew anyway, so it is difficult for terrorists to move about and hide without being noticed, and more difficult for them to get out. The IDF presence

facilitates intelligence gathering, and the troops can also conduct massive sweeps, house to house and block to block, pick up people, and interrogate them.”

The IDF units in West Bank cities and towns can amass detailed knowledge of a community, identifying terrorists and their sympathizers, tracking their movements and daily routines, and observing the people with whom they associate. Agents from Shabak, Israel’s General Security Service (also known as the Shin Bet), work alongside these units, participating in operations and often assigning missions. “The moment someone from Shabak comes with us, everything changes,” a young soldier in an elite reconnaissance unit told me over coffee and cake in his mother’s apartment. “The Shabak guy talks in Arabic to [the suspect] without an accent, or appears as an Arab guy himself. Shabak already knows everything about them, and that is such a shock to them. So they are afraid, and they will tell Shabak everything.” The success of Defensive Shield and the subsequent Operation Determined Way depends on this synchronization of intelligence and operations. A junior officer well acquainted with this environment says, “Whoever has better intelligence is the winner.”

The strategy—at least in the short run—is working. The dramatic decline in the number of suicide operations since last spring is proof enough. “Tactically, we are doing everything we can,” a senior officer involved in the framing of this policy told me, “and we have managed to prevent eighty percent of all attempts.” Another officer said, “We are now bringing the war to them. We do it so that we fight the war in *their* homes rather than in *our* homes. We try to make certain that we fight on their ground, where we can have the maximum advantage.” The goal of the IDF, though, is not simply to fight in a manner that plays to its strength; the goal is to actively shrink the time and space in which the suicide bombers and their operational commanders, logisticians, and handlers function—to stop them before they can cross the Green Line, by threatening their personal safety and putting them on the defensive.

Citizens in Israel, as in America, have a fundamental expectation that their government and its military and security forces will protect and defend them. Soldiers are expected to die, if necessary, in order to discharge this responsibility. As one senior IDF commander put it, “It is better for the IDF to bear the brunt of these attacks than Israeli civilians. The IDF is better prepared, protected, educated.” Thus security in Israel means to the IDF an almost indefinite deployment in the West Bank—a state of ongoing low-level war. For Palestinian civilians it means no respite from roadblocks and identity checks, cordon-and-search operations, lightning snatch-and-grabs, bombing raids, helicopter strikes, ground attacks, and other countermeasures that have turned densely populated civilian areas into war zones.

Many Israelis do not relish involvement in this protracted war of attrition, but even more of them accept that there is

no alternative. "Israel's ability to stand fast indefinitely is a tremendous advantage," says Dan Schueftan, an Israeli strategist and military thinker who teaches at Haifa University, "since the suicide bombers believe that time is on their side. It imposes a strain on the army, yes, but this is what the army is for." Indeed, no Israeli with whom I spoke on this visit doubted that the IDF's continued heavy presence in the West Bank was directly responsible for the drop in the number of suicide bombings. And I encountered very few who favored withdrawing the IDF from the West Bank. This view cut across ideological and demographic lines. As we dined one evening at Matza, which has been rebuilt, a centrist graduate student at Haifa University named Uzi Nisim told me that Palestinian terrorists "will have the power to hit us, to hurt us, once [the IDF] withdraws from Jenin and elsewhere on the West Bank." Ami Pedahzur, of Haifa University, who is a leftist, agreed. He said, "There is widespread recognition in Israel that this is the only way to stop terrorism." I later heard the same thing from a South African couple, relatively new immigrants to Israel who are active in a variety of human-rights endeavors. "Just the other day," the husband told me, "even my wife said, 'Thank God we have Sharon. Otherwise I wouldn't feel safe going out.'"

Nevertheless, few Israelis believe that the current situation

an informant told the police. When they were arrested, the terrorists were probably less than a day away from attacking: according to law-enforcement authorities, five bombs had been primed. "I wouldn't call them sophisticated," Howard Safir, the commissioner of police at the time, commented, "but they certainly were very dangerous." That suicide bombers don't need to be sophisticated is precisely what makes them so dangerous. All that's required is a willingness to kill and a willingness to die.

According to the Rand Corporation's chronology of worldwide terrorism, which begins in 1968 (the year acknowledged as marking the advent of modern international terrorism, whereby terrorists attack other countries or foreign targets in their own country), nearly two thirds of the 144 suicide bombings recorded have occurred in the past two years. No society, least of all the United States, can regard itself as immune from this threat. Israeli Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu emphasized this point when he addressed the U.S. Congress nine days after 9/11. So did Dan Schueftan, the Israeli strategist, when I asked him if he thought suicide terrorism would come to America in a form similar to that seen in Israel this past year. He said, "It is an interesting comment that the terrorists make: we will finish defeating the Jews because they love life so much. Their goal is to bring misery and grief

Al Qaeda has circulated a recruitment video extolling the virtues of martyrdom. This suggests that suicide attacks will continue to be a primary instrument in its war against—and perhaps even in—the United States.

will lead to any improvement in Israeli-Palestinian relations over the long run. Dennis Zinn, the defense correspondent for Israel's Channel 1, told me, "Yes, there is a drop-off [in suicide bombings]. When you have bombs coming down on your heads, you can't carry out planning and suicide attacks. But that doesn't take away their motivation. It only increases it."

Given the relative ease and the strategic and tactical attraction of suicide bombing, it is perhaps no wonder that after a five-day visit to Israel last fall, Louis Anemone, the security chief of the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority, concluded that New Yorkers—and, by implication, other Americans—face the same threat. "This stuff is going to be imported over here," he declared—a prediction that Vice President Dick Cheney and FBI Director Robert Mueller had already made. In March, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge also referred to the threat, saying in an interview with Fox News that we have to "prepare for the inevitability" of suicide bombings in the United States. Anemone even argued that "today's terrorists appear to be using Israel as a testing ground to prepare for a sustained attack against the U.S." In fact, Palestinians had tried a suicide attack in New York four years before 9/11; their plans to bomb a Brooklyn subway station were foiled only because

to people who have an arrogance of power. Who has this? The United States and Israel. Europe will suffer too. I don't think that it will happen in the U.S. on the magnitude we have seen it here, but I have no doubt that it will occur. We had the same discussion back in 1968, when El Al aircraft were hijacked and people said this is your problem, not ours."

The United States, of course, is not Israel. However much we may want to harden our hearts and our targets, the challenge goes far beyond fortifying a single national airline or corralling the enemy into a territory ringed by walls and barbed-wire fences that can be intensively monitored by our armed forces. But we can take precautions based on Israel's experience, and be confident that we are substantially reducing the threat of suicide terrorism here.

The police, the military, and intelligence agencies can take steps that work from the outside in, beginning far in time and distance from a potential attack and ending at the moment and the site of an actual attack. Although the importance of these steps is widely recognized, they have been implemented only unevenly across the United States.

- Understand the terrorists' operational environment. Know their *modus operandi* and targeting patterns. Suicide bombers are rarely lone outlaws; they are preceded by long logistical trails. Focus not just on suspected bombers

but on the infrastructure required to launch and sustain suicide-bombing campaigns. This is the essential spade-work. It will be for naught, however, if concerted efforts are not made to circulate this information quickly and systematically among federal, state, and local authorities.

- Develop strong, confidence-building ties with the communities from which terrorists are most likely to come, and mount communications campaigns to eradicate support from these communities. The most effective and useful intelligence comes from places where terrorists conceal themselves and seek to establish and hide their infrastructure. Law-enforcement officers should actively encourage and cultivate cooperation in a nonthreatening way.
- Encourage businesses from which terrorists can obtain bomb-making components to alert authorities if they notice large purchases of, for example, ammonium nitrate fertilizer; pipes, batteries, and wires; or chemicals commonly used to fabricate explosives. Information about customers who simply inquire about any of these materials can also be extremely useful to the police.
- Force terrorists to pay more attention to their own organizational security than to planning and carrying out attacks. The greatest benefit is in disrupting pre-attack operations. Given the highly fluid, international threat the United States faces, counterterrorism units, dedicated to identifying and targeting the intelligence-gathering and reconnaissance activities of terrorist organizations, should be established here within existing law-enforcement agencies. These units should be especially aware of places where organizations frequently recruit new members and the bombers themselves, such as community centers, social clubs, schools, and religious institutions.
- Make sure ordinary materials don't become shrapnel. Some steps to build up physical defenses were taken after 9/11—reinforcing park benches, erecting Jersey barriers around vulnerable buildings, and the like. More are needed, such as ensuring that windows on buses and subway cars are shatterproof, and that seats and other accoutrements are not easily dislodged or splintered. Israel has had to learn to examine every element of its public infrastructure. Israeli buses and bus shelters are austere for a reason.
- Teach law-enforcement personnel what to do at the moment of an attack or an attempt. Prevention comes first from the cop on the beat, who will be forced to make instant life-and-death decisions affecting those nearby. Rigorous training is needed for identifying a potential suicide bomber, confronting a suspect, and responding and securing the area around the attack site in the event of an explosion. Is the officer authorized to take action on sighting a suspected bomber, or must a supervisor or special unit be called first? Policies and procedures must be established. In the aftermath of a blast the police must determine whether emergency medical crews and firefighters may enter the site; concerns about a follow-

up attack can dictate that first responders be held back until the area is secured. The ability to make such lightning determinations requires training—and, tragically, experience. We can learn from foreign countries with long experience of suicide bombings, such as Israel and Sri Lanka, and also from our own responses in the past to other types of terrorist attacks.

America's enemies are marshaling their resources to continue the struggle that crystallized on 9/11. Exactly what shape that struggle will take remains to be seen. But a recruitment video reportedly circulated by al Qaeda as recently as spring of last year may provide some important clues. The seven-minute tape, seized from an al Qaeda member by U.S. authorities, extols the virtues of martyrdom and solicits recruits to Osama bin Laden's cause. It depicts scenes of *jihadists* in combat, followed by the successive images of twenty-seven martyrs with their names, where they were from, and where they died. Twelve of the martyrs are featured in a concluding segment with voice-over that says, "They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah. And with regard to those left behind who have not yet joined them in their bliss, the martyrs glory in the fact that on them is no fear, nor have they cause to grieve." The video closes with a message of greeting from the Black Banner Center for Islamic Information.

The greatest military onslaught in history against a terrorist group crushed the infrastructure of al Qaeda in Afghanistan, depriving it of training camps, operational bases, and command-and-control headquarters; killing and wounding many of its leaders and fighters; and dispersing the survivors. Yet this group still actively seeks to rally its forces and attract recruits. Ayman Zawahiri, bin Laden's chief lieutenant, laid out a list of terrorist principles in his book, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner* (2001), prominent among them the need for al Qaeda to "move the battle to the enemy's ground to burn the hands of those who ignite fire in our countries." He also mentioned "the need to concentrate on the method of martyrdom operations as the most successful way of inflicting damage against the opponent and the least costly to the *mujahideen* in terms of casualties." That martyrdom is highlighted in the recruitment video strongly suggests that suicide attacks will continue to be a primary instrument in al Qaeda's war against—and perhaps in—the United States. Suleiman Abu Gheith, al Qaeda's chief spokesman, has said as much. In rhetoric disturbingly reminiscent of the way that Palestinian terrorists describe their inevitable triumph over Israel, Abu Gheith declared, "Those youths that destroyed Americans with their planes, they did a good deed. There are thousands more young followers who look forward to death like Americans look forward to living." ■

Bruce Hoffman is the director of the Rand Corporation's Washington, D.C., office and the author of Inside Terrorism (1999).



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WHO SHOT MOHAMMED AL-DURA?

The image of a boy shot dead in his helpless father's arms during an Israeli confrontation with Palestinians has become the Pietà of the Arab world. Now a number of Israeli researchers are presenting persuasive evidence that the fatal shots could not have come from the Israeli soldiers known to have been involved in the confrontation. The evidence will not change Arab minds—but the episode offers an object lesson in the incendiary power of an icon

BY JAMES FALLOWS

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The name Mohammed al-Dura is barely known in the United States. Yet to a billion people in the Muslim world it is an infamous symbol of grievance against Israel and—because of this country's support for Israel—against the United States as well.

Al-Dura was the twelve-year-old Palestinian boy shot and killed during an exchange of fire between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian demonstrators on September 30, 2000. The final few seconds of his life, when he crouched in terror behind his father, Jamal, and then slumped to the ground after bullets ripped through his torso, were captured by a television camera and broadcast around the world. Through repetition they have become as familiar and significant to Arab and Islamic viewers as photographs of bombed-out Hiroshima are to the people of Japan—or as footage of the crumbling World Trade Center is to Americans. Several Arab countries have issued postage stamps carrying a picture of the terrified boy. One of Baghdad's main streets was renamed The Martyr Mohammed Aldura Street. Morocco has an al-Dura Park. In one of the messages Osama bin Laden released after the September 11 attacks and the subsequent U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, he began a list of indictments against "American arrogance and Israeli violence" by saying, "In the epitome of his arrogance and the peak of his media campaign in which he boasts of 'enduring freedom,' Bush must not forget the image of Mohammed al-Dura and his fellow Muslims in Palestine and Iraq. If he has forgotten, then we will not forget, God willing."

But almost since the day of the episode evidence has been emerging in Israel, under controversial and intriguing



circumstances, to indicate that the official version of the Mohammed al-Dura story is not true. It now appears that the boy cannot have died in the way reported by most of the world's media and fervently believed throughout the Islamic world. Whatever happened to him, he was not shot by the Israeli soldiers who were known to be involved in the day's fighting—or so I am convinced, after spending a week in Israel talking with those examining the case. The exculpatory evidence comes not from government or military officials in Israel, who have

an obvious interest in claiming that their soldiers weren't responsible, but from other sources. In fact, the Israel Defense Forces, or IDF, seem to prefer to soft-pedal the findings rather than bring any more attention to this gruesome episode. The research has been done by a variety of academics, ex-soldiers, and Web-loggers who have become obsessed with the case, and the evidence can be cross-checked.

No "proof" that originates in Israel is likely to change minds in the Arab world. The longtime Palestinian spokesperson Hanan Ashrawi dismissed one early Israeli report on the topic as a "falsified version of reality [that] blames the victims." Late this spring Said Hamad, a spokesman at the PLO office in Washington, told me of the new Israeli studies, "It does not surprise me that these reports would come out from the same people who shot Mohammed al-Dura. He was shot of course by the Israeli army, and not by anybody else." Even if evidence that could revise the understanding of this particular death were widely accepted (so far it has been embraced by a few Jewish groups in Europe and North America), it would probably have no effect on the underlying hatred and ongoing violence in the

region. Nor would evidence that clears Israeli soldiers necessarily support the overarching Likud policy of sending soldiers to occupy territories and protect settlements. The Israelis still looking into the al-Dura case do not all endorse Likud occupation policies. In fact, some strongly oppose them.

The truth about Mohammed al-Dura is important in its own right, because this episode is so raw and vivid in the Arab world and so hazy, if not invisible, in the West. Whatever the course of the occupation of Iraq, the United States has guaranteed an ample future supply of images of Arab suffering. The two explosions in Baghdad markets in the first weeks of the war, killing scores of civilians, offered an initial taste. Even as U.S. officials cautioned that it would take more time and study to determine whether U.S. or Iraqi ordnance had caused the blasts, the Arab media denounced the brutality that created these new martyrs. More of this lies ahead. The saga of Mohammed al-Dura illustrates the way the battles of wartime imagery may play themselves out.

The harshest version of the al-Dura case from the Arab side is that it proves the ancient "blood libel"—Jews want to kill gentile children—and shows that Americans count Arab life so cheap that they will let the Israelis keep on killing. The harshest version from the Israeli side is that the case proves the Palestinians' willingness to deliberately sacrifice even their own children in the name of the war against Zionism. In Tel Aviv I looked through hour after hour of videotape in an attempt to understand what can be known about what happened, and what it means.

THE DAY

The death of Mohammed al-Dura took place on the second day of what is now known as the second intifada, a wave of violent protests throughout the West Bank and Gaza. In the summer of 2000 Middle East peace negotiations had reached another impasse. On September 28 of that year, a Thursday, Ariel Sharon, then the leader of Israel's Likud Party but not yet Prime Minister, made a visit to the highly contested religious site in Jerusalem that Jews know as the Temple Mount and Muslims know as Haram al-Sharif, with its two mosques. For Palestinians this was the trigger—or, in the view of many Israelis, the pretext—for the expanded protests that began the next day.

On September 30 the protest sites included a crossroads in the occupied Gaza territory near the village of Netzarim, where sixty families of Israeli settlers live. The crossroads is a simple right-angle intersection of two roads in a lightly developed area. Three days earlier a roadside bomb had mortally wounded an IDF soldier there. At one corner of the intersection were an abandoned warehouse, two six-story office buildings known as the "twin towers," and a two-story building. (These structures and others surrounding the crossroads have since been torn down.) A group of IDF soldiers had made the two-story building their outpost, to guard the road leading to the Israeli settlement.

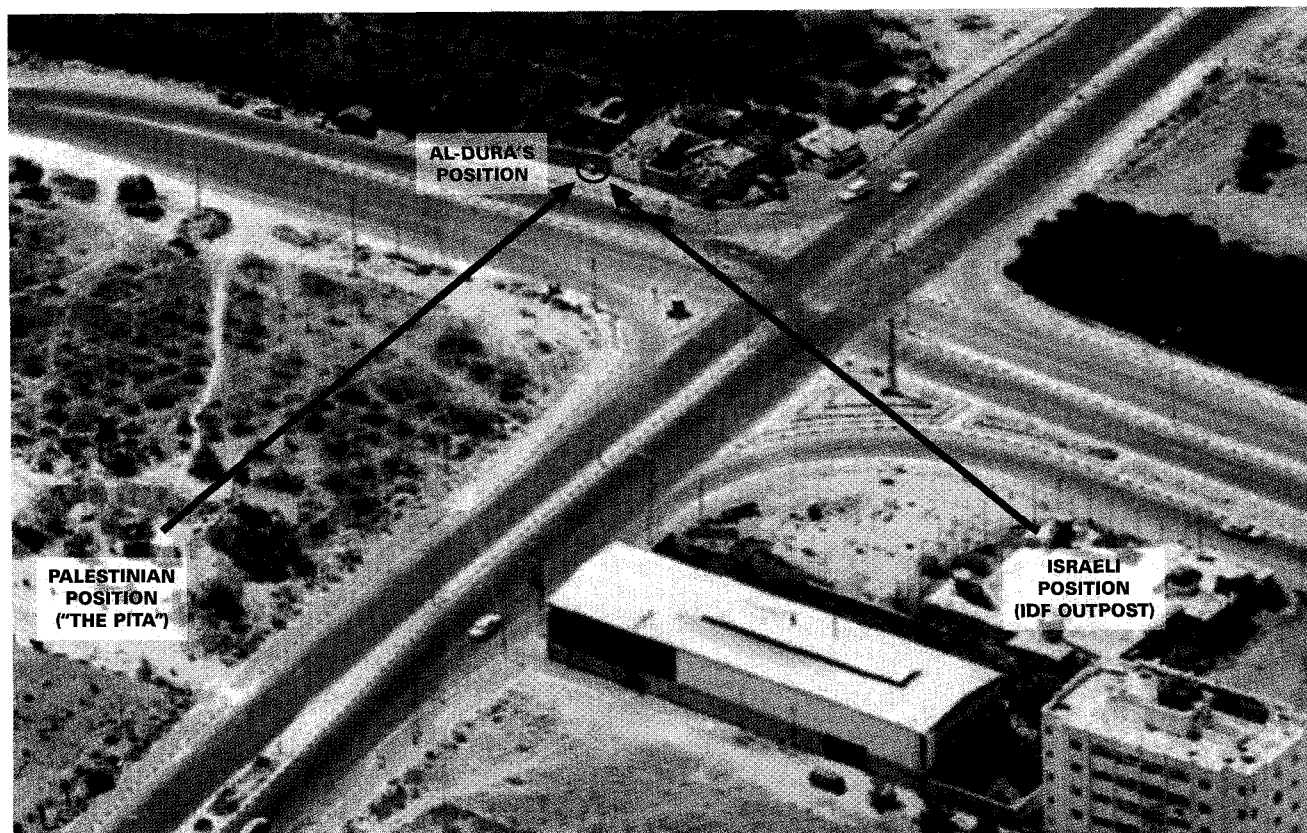
Diagonally across the intersection was a small, ramshackle building and a sidewalk bordered by a concrete wall. It was along this wall that Mohammed al-Dura and his father crouched before they were shot. (The father was injured but survived.) The other two corners of the crossroads were vacant land. One of them contained a circular dirt berm, known as the Pita because it was shaped like a pita loaf. A group of uniformed Palestinian policemen, armed with automatic rifles, were on the Pita for much of the day.

Early in the morning of Saturday, September 30, a crowd of Palestinians gathered at the Netzarim crossroads. TV crews, photographers, and reporters from many news agencies, including Reuters, AP, and the French television network France 2, were also at the ready. Because so many cameras were running for so many hours, there is abundant documentary evidence of most of the day's events—with a few strange and crucial exceptions, most of them concerning Mohammed al-Dura.

"Rushes" (raw footage) of the day's filming collected from these and other news organizations around the world tell a detailed yet confusing story. The tapes overlap in some areas but leave mysterious gaps in others. No one camera, of course, followed the day's events from beginning to end; and with so many people engaged in a variety of activities simultaneously, no one account could capture everything. Gabriel Weimann, the chairman of the communications department at the University of Haifa, whose book *Communicating Unreality* concerns the media's distorting effects, explained to me on my visit that the footage in its entirety has a "Rashomon effect." Many separate small dramas seem to be under way. Some of the shots show groups of young men walking around, joking, sitting and smoking and appearing to enjoy themselves. Others show isolated moments of intense action, as protesters yell and throw rocks, and shots ring out from various directions. Only when these vignettes are packaged together as a conventional TV news report do they seem to have a narrative coherence.

Off and on throughout the morning some of the several hundred Palestinian civilians at the crossroads mounted assaults on the IDF outpost. They threw rocks and Molotov cocktails. They ran around waving the Palestinian flag and trying to pull down an Israeli flag near the outpost. A few of the civilians had pistols or rifles, which they occasionally fired; the second intifada quickly escalated from throwing rocks to using other weapons. The Palestinian policemen, mainly in the Pita area, also fired at times. The IDF soldiers, according to Israeli spokesmen, were under orders not to fire in response to rocks or other thrown objects. They were to fire only if fired upon. Scenes filmed throughout the day show smoke puffing from the muzzles of M-16s pointed through the slits of the IDF outpost.

To watch the raw footage is to wonder, repeatedly, What is going on here? In some scenes groups of Palestinians duck for cover from gunfire while others nonchalantly talk

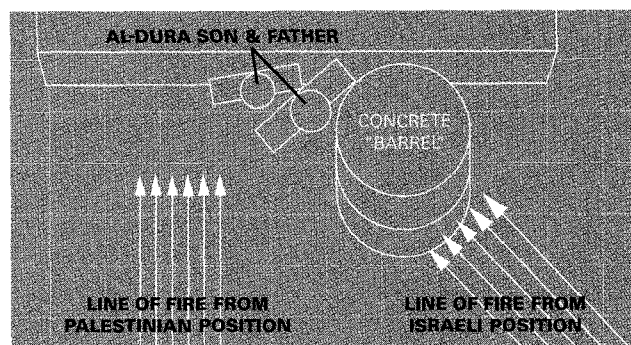


or smoke just five feet away. At one dramatic moment a Palestinian man dives forward clutching his leg, as if shot in the thigh. An ambulance somehow arrives to collect him exactly two seconds later, before he has stopped rolling from the momentum of his fall. Another man is loaded into an ambulance—and, in footage from a different TV camera, appears to jump out of it again some minutes later.

At around 3:00 P.M. Mohammed al-Dura and his father make their first appearance on film. The time can be judged by later comments from the father and some journalists on the scene, and by the length of shadows in the footage. Despite the number of cameras that were running that day, Mohammed and Jamal al-Dura appear in the footage of only one cameraman—Talal Abu-Rahma, a Palestinian working for France 2.

Jamal al-Dura later said that he had taken his son to a used-car market and was on the way back when he passed through the crossroads and into the crossfire. When first seen on tape, father and son are both crouched on the sidewalk behind a large concrete cylinder, their backs against the wall. The cylinder, about three feet high, is referred to as “the barrel” in most discussions of the case, although it appears to be a section from a culvert or a sewer system. On top of the cylinder is a big paving stone, which adds another eight inches or so of protection. The al-Duras were on the corner diagonally opposite the Israeli outpost. By hiding behind the barrel they were doing exactly what they should have done to protect themselves from Israeli fire.

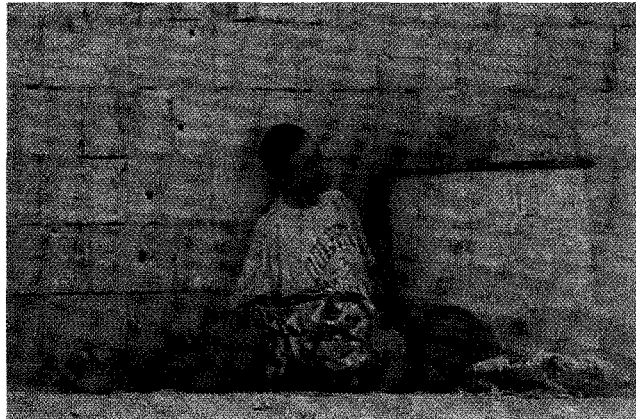
Many news accounts later claimed that the two were



under fire for forty-five minutes, but the action captured on camera lasts a very brief time. Jamal looks around desperately. Mohammed slides down behind him, as if to make his body disappear behind his father's. Jamal clutches a pack of cigarettes in his left hand, while he alternately waves and cradles his son with his right. The sound of gunfire is heard, and four bullet holes appear in the wall just to the left of the pair. The father starts yelling. There is another burst. Mohammed goes limp and falls forward across his father's lap, his shirt stained with blood. Jamal, too, is hit, and his head starts bobbling. The camera cuts away. Although France 2 or its cameraman may have footage that it or he has chosen not to release, no other visual record of the shooting or its immediate aftermath is known to exist. Other Palestinian casualties of the day are shown being evacuated, but there is no known on-tape evidence of the boy's being picked up, tended to, loaded into an ambulance, or handled in any other way after he was shot.

The footage of the shooting is unforgettable, and it illustrates the way in which television transforms reality. I have seen it replayed at least a hundred times now, and on each repetition I can't help hoping that this time the boy will get himself down low enough, this time the shots will miss. Through the compression involved in editing the footage for a news report, the scene acquired a clear story line by the time European, American, and Middle Eastern audiences saw it on television: Palestinians throw rocks. Israeli soldiers, from the slits in their outpost, shoot back. A little boy is murdered.

What is known about the rest of the day is fragmentary and additionally confusing. A report from a nearby hospital says that a dead boy was admitted on September 30, with



two gun wounds to the left side of his torso. But according to the photocopy I saw, the report also says that the boy was admitted at 1:00 P.M.; the tape shows that Mohammed was shot later in the afternoon. The doctor's report also notes, without further explanation, that the dead boy had a cut down his belly about eight inches long. A boy's body, wrapped in a Palestinian flag but with his face exposed, was later carried through the streets to a burial site (the exact timing is in dispute). The face looks very much like Mohammed's in the video footage. Thousands of mourners lined the route. A BBC TV report on the funeral began, "A Palestinian boy has been martyred." Many of the major U.S. news organizations reported that the funeral was held on the evening of September 30, a few hours after the shoot-

ing. Oddly, on film the procession appears to take place in full sunlight, with shadows indicative of midday.

THE AFTERMATH

Almost immediately news media around the world began reporting the tragedy. Print outlets were generally careful to say that Mohammed al-Dura was killed in "the crossfire" or "an exchange of fire" between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians. *The New York Times*, for instance, reported that he was "shot in the stomach as he crouched behind his father on the sidelines of an intensifying battle between Israeli and Palestinian security forces." But the same account included Jamal al-Dura's comment that the fatal volley had come from Israeli soldiers. Jacki Lyden said on NPR's *Weekend All Things Considered* that the boy had been "caught in crossfire." She then interviewed the France 2 cameraman, Talal Abu-Rahma, who said that he thought the Israelis had done the shooting.

ABU-RAHMA: I was very sad. I was crying. And I was remembering my children. I was afraid to lose my life. And I was sitting on my knees and hiding my head, carrying my camera, and I was afraid from the Israeli to see this camera, maybe they will think this is a weapon, you know, or I am trying to shoot on them. But I was in the most difficult situation in my life. A boy, I cannot save his life, and I want to protect myself.

LYDEN: Was there any attempt by the troops who were firing to cease fire to listen to what the father had to say? Could they even see what they were shooting at?

ABU-RAHMA: Okay. It's clear it was a father, it's clear it was a boy over there for ever who [presumably meaning "whoever"] was shooting on them from across the street, you know, in front of them. I'm sure from that area, I'm expert in that area, I've been in that area many times. I know every [unintelligible] in that area. Whoever was shooting, he got to see them, because that base is not far away from the boy and the father. It's about a hundred and fifty meters [about 500 feet].

On that night's broadcast of *ABC World News Tonight*, the correspondent Gillian Findlay said unambiguously that the boy had died "under Israeli fire." Although both NBC and CBS used the term "crossfire" in their reports, videos of Israeli troops firing and then the boy dying left little doubt about the causal relationship. Jamal al-Dura never wavered in his view that the Israelis had killed his son. "Are you sure they were Israeli bullets?" Diane Sawyer, of ABC News, asked him in an interview later that year. "I'm a hundred percent sure," he replied, through his translator. "They were Israelis." In another interview he told the Associated Press, "The bullets of the Zionists are the bullets that killed my son."

By Tuesday, October 3, all doubt seemed to have been removed. After a hurried internal investigation the IDF concluded that its troops were probably to blame. General Yom-Tov Samia, then the head of the IDF's Southern Command, which operated in Gaza, said, "It could very much be—this is an estimation—that a soldier in our posi-

tion, who has a very narrow field of vision, saw somebody hiding behind a cement block in the direction from which he was being fired at, and he shot in that direction.” General Giora Eiland, then the head of IDF operations, said on an Israeli radio broadcast that the boy was apparently killed by “Israeli army fire at the Palestinians who were attacking them violently with a great many petrol bombs, rocks, and very massive fire.”

The further attempt to actually justify killing the boy was, in terms of public opinion, yet more damning for the IDF. Eiland said, “It is known that [Mohammed al-Dura] participated in stone throwing in the past.” Samia asked what a twelve-year-old was doing in such a dangerous place to begin with. Ariel Sharon, who admitted that the footage of the shooting was “very hard to see,” and that the death was “a real tragedy,” also said, “The one that should be blamed is only the one ... that really instigated all those activities, and that is Yasir Arafat.”

Palestinians, and the Arab-Islamic world in general, predictably did not agree. Sweatshirts, posters, and wall murals were created showing the face of Mohammed al-Dura just before he died. “His face, stenciled three feet high, is a common sight on the walls of Gaza,” Matthew McAllester, of *Newsday*, wrote last year. “His name is known to every

SECOND THOUGHTS

In the fall of last year Gabriel Weimann mentioned the Mohammed al-Dura case in a special course that he teaches at the Israeli Military Academy, National Security and Mass Media. Like most adults in Israel, Weimann, a tall, athletic-looking man in his early fifties, still performs up to thirty days of military-reserve duty a year. His reserve rank is sergeant, whereas the students in his class are lieutenant colonels and above.

To underscore the importance of the media in international politics, Weimann shows some of his students a montage of famous images from past wars: for World War II the flag raising at Iwo Jima; for Vietnam the South Vietnamese officer shooting a prisoner in the head and the little girl running naked down a path with napalm on her back. For the current intifada, Weimann told his students, the lasting iconic image would be the frightened face of Mohammed al-Dura.

One day last fall, after he discussed the images, a student spoke up. “I was there,” he said. “We didn’t do it.”

“Prove it,” Weimann said. He assigned part of the class, as its major research project, a reconsideration of the evidence in the case. A surprisingly large amount was available. The students began by revisiting an investigation undertaken by the Israeli military soon after the event.

The fundamental point of the Israeli investigation—that the concrete barrel lay between the outpost and the boy, and no bullets had gone through the barrel—could be confirmed independently from news footage.

Arab, his death cited as the ultimate example of Israeli military brutality.” In modern warfare, Bob Simon said on CBS’s *60 Minutes*, “one picture can be worth a thousand weapons,” and the picture of the doomed boy amounted to “one of the most disastrous setbacks Israel has suffered in decades.” Gabriel Weimann, of Haifa University, said that when he first heard of the case, “it made me sick to think this was done in my name.” Amnon Lord, an Israeli columnist who has investigated the event, told me in an e-mail message that it was important “on the mythological level,” because it was “a framework story, a paradigmatic event,” illustrating Israeli brutality. Dan Schueftan, an Israeli strategist and military thinker, told me that the case was uniquely damaging. He said, “[It was] the ultimate symbol of what the Arabs want to think: the father is trying to protect his son, and the satanic Jews—there is no other word for it—are trying to kill him. These Jews are people who will come to kill our children, because they are not human.”

Two years after Mohammed al-Dura’s death his stepmother, Amal, became pregnant with another child, the family’s eighth. The parents named him Mohammed. Amal was quoted late in her pregnancy as saying, “It will send a message to Israel: ‘Yes, you’ve killed one, but God has compensated for him. You can’t kill us all.’”

Shortly after the shooting General Samia was contacted by Nahum Shahaf, a physicist and engineer who had worked closely with the IDF on the design of pilotless drone aircraft. While watching the original news broadcasts of the shooting Shahaf had been alarmed, like most viewers inside and outside Israel. But he had also noticed an apparent anomaly. The father seemed to be concerned mainly about a threat originating on the far side of the barrel behind which he had taken shelter. Yet when he and his son were shot, the barrel itself seemed to be intact. What, exactly, did this mean?

Samia commissioned Shahaf and an engineer, Yosef Duriel, to work on a second IDF investigation of the case. “The reason from my side is to check and clean up our values,” Samia later told Bob Simon, of CBS. He said he wanted “to see that we are still acting as the IDF.” Shahaf stressed to Samia that the IDF should do whatever it could to preserve all physical evidence. But because so much intifada activity continued in the Netzarim area, the IDF demolished the wall and all related structures. Shahaf took one trip to examine the crossroads, clad in body armor and escorted by Israeli soldiers. Then, at a location near Beersheba, Shahaf, Duriel, and others set up models of the barrel, the wall, and the IDF shooting position, in order to re-enact the crucial events.

Bullets had not been recovered from the boy’s body at

the hospital, and the family was hardly willing to agree to an exhumation to re-examine the wounds. Thus the most important piece of physical evidence was the concrete barrel. In the TV footage it clearly bears a mark from the Israeli Bureau of Standards, which enabled investigators to determine its exact dimensions and composition. When they placed the equivalent in front of a concrete wall and put mannequins representing father and son behind it, a conclusion emerged: soldiers in the Israeli outpost could not have fired the shots whose impact was shown on TV. The evidence was cumulative and reinforcing. It involved the angle, the barrel, the indentations, and the dust.

Mohammed al-Dura and his father looked as if they were sheltering themselves against fire from the IDF outpost. In this they were successful. The films show that the barrel was between them and the Israeli guns. The line of sight from the IDF position to the pair was blocked by concrete. Conceivably, some other Israeli soldier was present and fired from some other angle, although there is no evidence of this and no one has ever raised it as a possibility; and there were Palestinians in all the other places, who would presumably have noticed the presence of additional IDF troops. From the one location where Israeli soldiers are known to have been, the only way to hit the boy

dust. The more oblique the angle, the larger and longer the cloud of dust. In the video of the shooting the clouds of dust near the al-Duras' heads are small and round. Shots from the IDF outpost would necessarily have been oblique.

In short, the physical evidence of the shooting was in all ways inconsistent with shots coming from the IDF outpost—and in all ways consistent with shots coming from someplace behind the France 2 cameraman, roughly in the location of the Pita. Making a positive case for who might have shot the boy was not the business of the investigators hired by the IDF. They simply wanted to determine whether the soldiers in the outpost were responsible. Because the investigation was overseen by the IDF and run wholly by Israelis, it stood no chance of being taken seriously in the Arab world. But its fundamental point—that the concrete barrel lay between the outpost and the boy, and no bullets had gone through the barrel—could be confirmed independently from news footage.

It was at this point that the speculation about Mohammed al-Dura's death left the realm of geometry and ballistics and entered the world of politics, paranoia, fantasy, and hatred. Almost as soon as the second IDF investigation was under way, Israeli commentators started

The truth about Mohammed al-Dura is important in its own right, because this episode is so raw and vivid in the Arab world and so hazy, if not invisible, in the West. No version that is considered believable by all sides is likely to emerge.

would have been to shoot through the concrete barrel.

This brings us to the nature of the barrel. Its walls were just under two inches thick. On the test range investigators fired M-16 bullets at a similar barrel. Each bullet made an indentation only two fifths to four fifths of an inch deep. Penetrating the barrel would have required multiple hits on both sides of the barrel's wall. The videos of the shooting show fewer than ten indentations on the side of the barrel facing the IDF, indicating that at some point in the day's exchanges of fire the Israelis did shoot at the barrel. But photographs taken after the shooting show no damage of any kind on the side of the barrel facing the al-Duras—that is, no bullets went through.

Further evidence involves the indentations in the concrete wall. The bullet marks that appear so ominously in the wall seconds before the fatal volley are round. Their shape is significant because of what it indicates about the angle of the gunfire. The investigators fired volleys into a concrete wall from a variety of angles. They found that in order to produce a round puncture mark, they had to fire more or less straight on. The more oblique the angle, the more elongated and skidlike the hole became.

The dust resulting from a bullet's impact followed similar rules. A head-on shot produced the smallest, roundest cloud of

questioning its legitimacy and Israeli government officials distanced themselves from its findings. "It is hard to describe in mild terms the stupidity of this bizarre investigation," the liberal newspaper *Ha'aretz* said in an editorial six weeks after the shooting. The newspaper claimed that Shahaf and Durie were motivated not by a need for dispassionate inquiry but by the belief that Palestinians had staged the whole shooting. (Shahaf told me that he began his investigation out of curiosity but during the course of it became convinced that the multiple anomalies indicated a staged event.) "The fact that an organized body like the IDF, with its vast resources, undertook such an amateurish investigation—almost a pirate endeavor—on such a sensitive issue, is shocking and worrying," *Ha'aretz* said.

As the controversy grew, Samia abbreviated the investigation and subsequently avoided discussing the case. Most government officials, I was told by many sources, regard drawing any further attention to Mohammed al-Dura as self-defeating. No new "proof" would erase images of the boy's death, and resurrecting the discussion would only ensure that the horrible footage was aired yet again. IDF press officials did not return any of my calls, including those requesting to interview soldiers who were at the outpost.

So by the time Gabriel Weimann's students at the Israeli Military Academy, including the one who had been on the scene, began looking into the evidence last fall, most Israelis had tried to put the case behind them. Those against the Likud policy of encouraging settlements in occupied territory think of the shooting as one more illustration of the policy's cost. Those who support the policy view Mohammed al-Dura's death as an unfortunate instance of "collateral damage," to be weighed against damage done to Israelis by Palestinian terrorists. Active interest in the case was confined mainly to a number of Israelis and European Jews who believe the event was manipulated to blacken Israel's image. Nahum Shahaf has become the leading figure in this group.

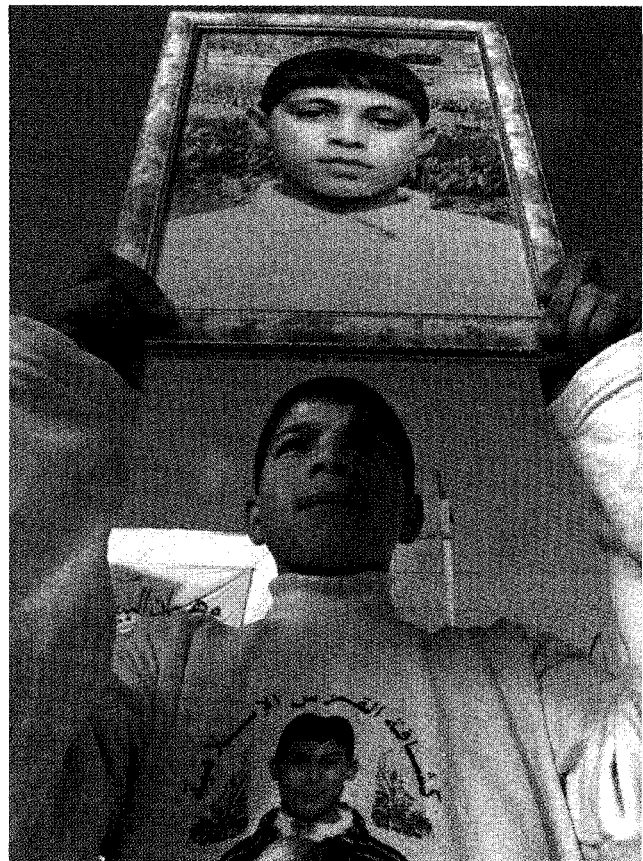
Shahaf is a type familiar to reporters: the person who has given himself entirely to a cause or a mystery and can talk about its ramifications as long as anyone will listen. He is a strongly built man of medium height, with graying hair combed back from his forehead. In photos he always appears stern, almost glowering, whereas in the time I spent with him he seemed to be constantly smiling, joking, having fun. Shahaf is in his middle fifties, but like many other scientists and engineers, he has the quality of seeming not quite grown up. He used to live in California, where, among other pursuits, he worked as a hang-gliding instructor. He moves and gesticulates with a teenager's lack of self-consciousness about his bearing. I liked him.

Before getting involved in the al-Dura case, Shahaf was known mainly as an inventor. He was only the tenth person to receive a medal from the Israeli Ministry of Science, for his work on computerized means of compressing digital video transmission. "But for two and a half years I am spending time only on the al-Dura case," he told me. "I left everything for it, because I believe that this is most important." When I arrived at his apartment, outside Tel Aviv, to meet him one morning, I heard a repeated sound from one room that I assumed was from a teenager's playing a violent video game. An hour later, when we walked into that room—which has been converted into a video-research laboratory, with multiple monitors, replay devices, and computers—I saw that it was one mob scene from September 30, being played on a continuous loop.

Shahaf's investigation for the IDF showed that the Israeli soldiers at the outpost did not shoot the boy. But he now believes that everything that happened at Netzarim on September 30 was a ruse. The boy on the film may or may not have been the son of the man who held him. The boy and the man may or may not actually have been shot. If shot, the boy may or may not actually have died. If he died, his killer may or may not have been a member of the Palestinian force, shooting at him directly. The entire goal of the exercise, Shahaf says, was to manufacture a child martyr, in correct anticipation of the damage this would do to Israel in the eyes of the world—especially the Islamic world. "I believe that one day there will be good things in common

between us and the Palestinians," he told me. "But the case of Mohammed al-Dura brings the big flames between Israel and the Palestinians and Arabs. It brings a big wall of hate. They can say this is the proof, the ultimate proof, that Israeli soldiers are boy-murderers. And that hatred breaks any chance of having something good in the future."

The reasons to doubt that the al-Duras, the cameramen, and hundreds of onlookers were part of a coordinated fraud are obvious. Shahaf's evidence for this conclusion, based on his videos, is essentially an accumulation of oddities and unanswered questions about the chaotic events of the day. Why is there no footage of the boy after he was shot? Why does he appear to move in his father's lap, and to clasp a hand over his eyes after he is supposedly dead? Why



is one Palestinian policeman wearing a Secret Service-style earpiece in one ear? Why is another Palestinian man shown waving his arms and yelling at others, as if "directing" a dramatic scene? Why does the funeral appear—based on the length of shadows—to have occurred before the apparent time of the shooting? Why is there no blood on the father's shirt just after they are shot? Why did a voice that seems to be that of the France 2 cameraman yell, in Arabic, "The boy is dead" before he had been hit? Why do ambulances appear instantly for seemingly everyone else and not for al-Dura?

A handful of Israeli and foreign commentators have taken up Shahaf's cause. A Web site called masada2000.org says of the IDF's initial apology, "They acknowledged guilt, for never in their collective minds would any one of them have

imagined a scenario whereby Mohammed al-Dura might have been murdered by his *own* people ... a cruel plot staged and executed by Palestinian sharp-shooters and a television cameraman!" Amnon Lord, writing for the magazine *Makor Rishon*, referred to a German documentary directed by Esther Schapira that was "based on Shahaf's own decisive conclusion" and that determined "that Muhammad Al-Dura was not killed by IDF gunfire at Netzarim junction." "Rather," Lord continued, "the Palestinians, in cooperation with foreign journalists and the UN, arranged a well-staged production of his death." In March of this year a French writer, Gérard Huber, published a book called *Contre expertise d'une mise en scène* (roughly, *Re-evaluation of a Re-enactment*). It, too, argues that the entire event was staged. In an e-mail message to me Huber said that before knowing of Shahaf's studies he had been aware that "the images of little Mohammed were part of the large war of images between Palestinians and Israelis." But until meeting Shahaf, he said, "I had not imagined that it involved a fiction"—a view he now shares. "The question of 'Who killed little Mohammed?'" he said, "has become a screen to disguise the real question, which is: 'Was little Mohammed actually killed?'"

The truth about this case will probably never be determined. Or, to put it more precisely, no version of truth that is considered believable by all sides will ever emerge. For most of the Arab world, the rights and wrongs of the case are beyond dispute: an innocent boy was murdered, and his blood is on Israel's hands. Mention of contrary evidence or hypotheses only confirms the bottomless dishonesty of the guilty parties—much as Holocaust-denial theories do in the Western world. For the handful of people collecting evidence of a staged event, the truth is also clear, even if the proof is not in hand. I saw Nahum Shahaf lose his good humor only when I asked him what he thought explained the odd timing of the boy's funeral, or the contradictions in eyewitness reports, or the other loose ends in the case. "I don't 'think,' I know!" he said several times. "I am a physicist. I work from the evidence." Schapira had collaborated with him for the German documentary and then produced a film advancing the "minimum" version of his case, showing that the shots did not, could not have, come from the IDF outpost. She disappointed him by not embracing the maximum version—the all-encompassing hoax—and counseled him not to talk about a staged event unless he could produce a living boy or a cooperative eyewitness. Shahaf said that he still thought well of her, and that he was not discouraged. "I am only two and a half years into this work," he told me. "It took twelve years for the truth of the Dreyfus case to come out."

For anyone else who knows about Mohammed al-Dura but is not in either of the decided camps—the Arabs who are sure they know what happened, the revisionists who are equally sure—the case will remain in the uncomfortable

realm of events that cannot be fully explained or understood. "Maybe it was an accidental shooting," Gabriel Weimann told me, after reading his students' report, which, like the German documentary, supported the "minimum" conclusion—the Israeli soldiers at the outpost could not have killed the boy. (He could not show the report to me, he said, on grounds of academic confidentiality.) "Maybe even it was staged—although I don't think my worst enemy is so inhuman as to shoot a boy for the sake of publicity. Beyond that, I do not know." Weimann's recent work involves the way that television distorts reality in attempting to reconstruct it, by putting together loosely related or even random events in what the viewer imagines is a coherent narrative flow. The contrast between the confusing, contradictory hours of raw footage from the Netzarim crossroads and the clear, gripping narrative of the evening news reports assembled from that footage is a perfect example, he says.

The significance of this case from the American perspective involves the increasingly chaotic ecology of truth around the world. In Arab and Islamic societies the widespread belief that Israeli soldiers shot this boy has political consequences. So does the belief among some Israelis and Zionists in Israel and abroad that Palestinians will go to any lengths to smear them. Obviously, these beliefs do not create the basic tensions in the Middle East. The Israeli policy of promoting settlements in occupied territory, and the Palestinian policy of terror, are deeper obstacles. There would never have been a showdown at the Netzarim crossroads, or any images of Mohammed al-Dura's shooting to be parsed in different ways, if there were no settlement nearby for IDF soldiers to protect. Gabriel Weimann is to the left of Dan Schueftan on Israel's political spectrum, but both believe that Israel should end its occupation. I would guess that Nahum Shahaf thinks the same thing, even though he told me that to preserve his "independence" as a researcher, he wanted to "isolate myself from any kind of political question."

The images intensify the self-righteous determination of each side. If anything, modern technology has aggravated the problem of mutually exclusive realities. With the Internet and TV, each culture now has a more elaborate apparatus for "proving" dramatizing, and disseminating its particular truth.

In its engagement with the Arab world the United States has assumed that what it believes are noble motives will be perceived as such around the world. We mean the best for the people under our control; stability, democracy, prosperity, are our goals; why else would we have risked so much to help an oppressed people achieve them? The case of Mohammed al-Dura suggests the need for much more modest assumptions about the way other cultures—in particular today's embattled Islam—will perceive our truths. ■

James Fallows is a national correspondent for The Atlantic and the author of Looking at the Sun (1994), Breaking the News (1996), and Free Flight (2001). His article about the postwar future of Iraq, "The Fifty-first State?" appeared in the November 2002 Atlantic.

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JFK'S SECOND TERM

Toward the end of his life John F. Kennedy increasingly distrusted his military advisers and was changing his views on foreign policy. A fresh look at the final months of his presidency suggests that a second Kennedy term might have produced not only an American withdrawal from Vietnam but also rapprochement with Fidel Castro's Cuba

BY ROBERT DALLEK

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When Lyndon Johnson assumed the presidency, after the assassination of John F. Kennedy, in November of 1963, he knew that in order to accrue political capital he would initially need to champion goals and policies that Kennedy had already been pursuing. Not long before his death Kennedy had scrawled the word "poverty" on a piece of paper and circled it multiple times; this note fell into the hands of his brother Robert and became a symbolic justification for Johnson's declaration of the War on Poverty, early in 1964. Similarly, many of the things that Johnson pushed through Congress in his first two years as President—such as an \$11 billion tax cut, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the 1965 laws that brought Medicare and Medicaid into existence and that poured billions of federal dollars into primary and secondary education—can readily be seen as extensions of the avowed policies of the Kennedy Administration. The details might have been different—and Kennedy might well have had more trouble than Johnson passing the Voting Rights Act of 1965—but historians generally agree that if Kennedy had lived out his first term and won a second, America would have witnessed something similar to the early years of Johnson's Great Society.

On foreign policy, too, Johnson at first strove consciously to follow his predecessor. And some historians have argued that in this realm as well, LBJ indeed pursued a course that JFK had already plotted. If Kennedy had lived, according to this line of thinking, he would have continued a policy of antagonism toward Cuba and steady escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Johnson certainly believed that this was what Kennedy intended to do.

But what if it wasn't? Some Kennedy aides have always insisted that Johnson misread JFK's plans for Vietnam. They say that Kennedy had begun to rethink the U.S. presence in Indochina, and was reluctant to increase it. Johnson's defenders have tended to see this argument as wishful

thinking by those who seek to exculpate JFK from what happened in Vietnam while laying all the blame on LBJ. The argument can never fully be put to rest. But newly available documents, along with a reappraisal of the existing record—especially of Kennedy's concern about press reports from Saigon—suggest that Kennedy's aides are correct: what Kennedy envisioned for U.S. policy in Vietnam was substantially different from what Johnson thought it was. Perhaps more surprising—given that at the time of Kennedy's death the Cuban Missile Crisis was not long past, and that the CIA was still plotting to kill Fidel Castro—JFK appears to have been moving toward the idea of accommodation with Cuba.

A consideration of likely post-1963 Kennedy policies must begin with JFK's views on how political and military leaders make decisions about armed action. *Why England Slept*, his Harvard senior thesis, which was published as a book in 1940, showed a healthy skepticism regarding the astuteness of both political and military officials in assessing foreign threats. He also doubted the effectiveness of a purely military approach to many political problems, especially in light of what he observed during his extensive travels to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia in the late 1930s and after World War II. "If one thing was borne into me as a result of my experiences in the Middle as well as the Far East," Kennedy said after a trip as a congressman in 1951, "it is that communism cannot be met effectively by merely the force of arms." And his own military experience as a young man had convinced him that military chiefs were not necessarily the best judges of when and how to fight a war. As a junior naval officer in 1943 and 1944, he marveled at the incompetence of many of his superiors. In a letter to his parents from the South Pacific, where he was serving as a PT Boat commander, he wrote that the Navy had "brought back a lot of old Captains and Commanders from retirement and ... they give the im-

pression of their brains being in their tails." He complained in a letter to a friend of "this heaving puffing war machine of ours," and lamented the "super-human ability of the Navy to screw up everything they touch." Later in life his reading of history, especially Barbara Tuchman's book *The Guns of August* (1962), about World War I, reinforced his doubts.

Misgivings about the wisdom of military responses to communism, however, were not enough to deter Kennedy from authorizing the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion, in April of 1961. In the aftermath of the invasion, which fizzled when a brigade of CIA-trained Cuban exiles were captured on the beach, the CIA's inspector general ascribed the failure to "bad planning," "poor" staffing, and "fragmentation of authority," and to the false assumption that "the invasion would,

State Dean Rusk, National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, and Undersecretary of State George Ball makes clear that Kennedy had a low opinion of many U.S. diplomats and Defense Department officials. He described career envoys as weak or spineless. "I just see an awful lot of fellows ... who don't seem to have *cojones*," he said. "[Whereas] the Defense Department looks as if that's all they've got. They haven't any brains ... I know you get all this sort of virility over at the Pentagon, and you get a lot of Arleigh Burkes [a reference to the chief of naval operations]: admirable, nice figure, without any brains."

His experiences with the Joint Chiefs of Staff deepened Kennedy's reservations about the advice he was receiving from the military. One incident that alarmed him came



Meetings with Curtis LeMay—the Air Force chief of staff, seen here with the President in 1962—drove Kennedy into "sort of a fit"

like a *deus ex machina*, produce a shock ... [and] trigger an uprising." Although he publicly accepted blame for the defeat, Kennedy privately wondered how he could have been so stupid as to trust CIA and military assurances about the likely success of the attack.

Paul Nitze, who in the 1950s worked with Secretary of State Dean Acheson on defense issues, and who served in the Kennedy Administration as Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's assistant secretary for international security affairs, said in his oral history of the Administration that President Kennedy "was always troubled with ... how do you obtain military advice; how do you check into it; how do you have an independent view as to its accuracy and relevance?" A tape of a 1962 conversation with Secretary of

shortly after the Bay of Pigs debacle, when the Joint Chiefs urged Kennedy to authorize the use of air and land forces in Laos to avert a communist takeover. Kennedy wanted to know what they intended if such an operation failed. The Joint Chiefs answered, in the words of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, "You start using atomic weapons?" Lyman Lemnitzer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, promised that if they were given authorization to use nuclear weapons, they could guarantee victory. Kennedy saw Lemnitzer's assurance as absurd. Later he said, "Since he couldn't think of any further escalation, he would have to promise us victory." Kennedy and the Soviets ultimately reached a negotiated settlement in Laos. But the disagreement with his advisers would set a pattern.

Kennedy felt the most tension with General Lauris Norstad, the commander of NATO forces, and General Curtis LeMay, the chief of staff of the Air Force. Both Norstad and LeMay believed that any war with the Soviet Union would have to escalate quickly into a nuclear exchange if the United States was to have any hope of "winning." Kennedy found LeMay, who would become the model for a deranged general in the 1964 movie *Dr. Strangelove*, especially intolerable. Roswell Gilpatric, Kennedy's deputy secretary of defense, recalled in his oral history of the Kennedy Administration that the President "ended up in sort of a fit" every time he had to see LeMay. "I mean he just would be frantic at the end of a session with LeMay," Gilpatric said, "because, you know, LeMay couldn't listen or wouldn't take in, and he would make what Kennedy considered ... outrageous proposals that bore no relation to the state of affairs in the 1960s. And the President never saw him unless at some ceremonial affair, or where he felt he had to make a record of having listened to LeMay, as he did on the whole question of an air strike against Cuba. And he had to sit there. I saw the President right afterwards. He was just choleric."

"I don't think he ever really satisfied himself that he had found a way to get the best possible military help on such matters," Nitze said.

According to Nitze, Kennedy saw a decision to use nuclear weapons in a conflict as a responsibility that belonged not to the Joint Chiefs but to himself. It was a decision he hoped

he would never have to make, and he tried very hard to ensure that he wouldn't have to. Walt W. Rostow, a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Council, recalled in an oral history that Kennedy thought an all-out nuclear conflict would be "a truly monstrous event in the U.S.—let alone in world history." Although the United States had a large advantage over the Soviets, both in total number of nuclear weapons and in the capacity to deliver them, everyone concluded that a nuclear exchange would bring, in Rostow's words, "virtual incineration" to Western Europe, Russia, and the United States. In September of 1961, after leaving a briefing at which Lemnitzer described the effects of nuclear war, Kennedy said to Rusk, "And we call ourselves the human race."

Despite his horror at the thought of fighting such a war, Kennedy greatly expanded America's nuclear arsenal and refused to publicly renounce a first-strike strategy. Fearful that Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev might push the United States into an all-out clash, JFK saw no alternative to increased preparedness. "That son of a bitch Khrushchev," Rostow once heard him complain, "he won't stop until we actually take a step that might lead to nuclear war ... There's

no way you can talk that fella into stopping, until you take some really credible step." After meeting the Premier in Vienna, in June of 1961, Kennedy was frustrated by his inability to soften Khrushchev's hawkish attitudes on nuclear arms. He told Hugh Sidey, of *Time* magazine, "I never met a man like this. [I] talked about how a nuclear exchange would kill seventy million people in ten minutes and he just looked at me as if to say, 'So what?' My impression was that he just didn't give a damn if it came to that." According to the journalist Fred Kaplan, to ensure against a Soviet miscalculation, Kennedy directed McNamara to "repeat to the point of boredom" that the United States would use nuclear weapons only if it or its allies were directly attacked, and that America was not even thinking about preventive war.

In a conversation with his aide Kenneth O'Donnell after the Vienna summit, Kennedy said, "All wars start from stupidity. [It is] particularly stupid to risk killing a million Americans over an argument about access rights on an Autobahn in the Soviet zone of Germany, or because the Germans want Germany reunified ... Before I back Khrushchev against the wall ... the freedom of all of Western Europe will have to be at stake." But despite Kennedy's concerns,

the military exerted persistent pressure for armed action against communism.

Kennedy's resistance to this pressure reached a climax during the Cuban Missile Crisis, in October of 1962. The blockade or quarantine of Cuba that he imposed to force the removal of nuclear

"The first advice I'm going to give my successor is to watch the generals ... just because they were military men [didn't mean] their opinions on military matters were worth a damn."

weapons did not satisfy the Joint Chiefs. When Kennedy first proposed it, General LeMay said he saw direct military intervention as a necessity. "This blockade and political action I see leading into war," he told Kennedy in a conversation captured on tape by a White House recording device. "I don't see any other solution. It will lead right into war. This is almost as bad as the appeasement at Munich." LeMay indirectly threatened to make his dissent public. "I think that a blockade, and political talk, would be considered by a lot of our friends and neutrals as being a pretty weak response to this. And I'm sure a lot of our own citizens would feel that way too. In other words, you're in a pretty bad fix at the present time."

LeMay's words angered Kennedy, who asked, "What did you say?" LeMay repeated, "You're in a pretty bad fix." Kennedy responded with a hollow laugh, and said, "You're in there with me." Kenneth O'Donnell recalled in his memoirs that after the meeting Kennedy asked him, "Can you imagine LeMay saying a thing like that? These brass hats have one great advantage in their favor. If we listen to them, and do what they want us to do, none of us will be alive later to tell them that they were wrong."

On October 28 Khrushchev promised to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba, but at a meeting that same day the Joint Chiefs stated their opposition to Kennedy's ongoing restraint. (In response to Khrushchev's promise Kennedy had pledged not to invade Cuba, a pledge that troubled the Chiefs, who believed that Castro's removal from power was essential.) Admiral George Anderson told the President, "We have been had!" LeMay called the settlement "the greatest defeat in our history," and urged a prompt invasion. McNamara remembered Kennedy as "absolutely shocked" and "stuttering in reply." Kennedy later told Benjamin Bradlee, then the Washington bureau chief for *Newsweek*, "The first advice I'm going to give my successor is to watch the generals and to avoid feeling that just because they were military men their opinions on military matters were worth a damn."

A week after the missile crisis ended, while uncertainty continued as to whether Khrushchev would in fact remove all offensive weapons from Cuba, Kennedy responded to an updated invasion plan proposed by his military advisers. In a declassified document now held in the national-security files at the JFK Library, in Boston, he drew on his knowledge of history in restating his conviction that an attack on Cuba carried huge military risks: "Considering the size of the problem, the equipment that is involved on the other side, the Nationalists['] fervor which may be engendered," he wrote to McNamara, "it seems to me we could end up bogged down. I think we should keep constantly in mind the British in [the] Boer War, the Russians in the last war with the Finnish and our own experience with the North Koreans." "An invasion would have been a mistake—a wrong use of our power," Kennedy told his aide Arthur Schlesinger. "But the military are mad. They wanted to do this."

From the moment he took office, in January of 1961, Kennedy had been eager to settle the Cuban problem without overt military action by the United States. Through the fall of 1963, however, he remained resigned to the possibility that Cuban aggression or developments on the island could compel American air attacks or even an invasion, and some of his advisers continued to pressure him to engage in covert action to depose Castro. On October 29, 1962, the day after Khrushchev ended the missile crisis, Castro publicly announced that he was ready for an agreement with the United States, but his conditions—an end to the economic embargo that Washington had imposed in 1960, and to U.S. subversion, sponsorship of exile raids, U-2 overflights, and control of Guantánamo—were more than any U.S. government could accept as a starting point for negotiations, especially if it hoped to avoid the outrage of Cuban exiles and their American allies.

At the same time, Kennedy was beginning to see rapprochement as the best way to end the difficulties with Havana, especially because the National Security Council

was now acknowledging that all the proposals thus far for toppling Castro were "singularly unpromising" (as an NSC memo stated). In the spring of 1963 James B. Donovan, a New York lawyer who had negotiated the release of the nearly 1,200 Cuban exiles captured at the Bay of Pigs, became an intermediary between Havana and Washington. During discussions about releasing twenty-four imprisoned Americans accused of being CIA agents, Castro, who was unhappy with Moscow's treatment of Cuba, asked for suggestions on how to establish official relations with the United States, which he saw, according to Donovan, as necessary. He wondered whether Donovan could be given an official status that would make the negotiations likelier to move both sides closer to rapprochement. Donovan's report on his conversation with Castro greatly interested Kennedy.

Kennedy relied on William Attwood—a former editor of *Look* magazine who had interviewed Castro, had served from March of 1961 to May of 1963 as ambassador to Guinea, and was now an adviser to the United States UN Mission—to explore further the possibility of rapprochement. If this were to include the removal of all Soviet forces from Cuba, an end to Cuba's subversive activities throughout the Western Hemisphere, and Havana's commitment to nonalignment in the Cold War, Kennedy believed he could sell it to the American public. In return Kennedy surely would have been willing to stop the economic embargo, the U-2 overflights, and other threats to Castro's continued reign—to do everything, in fact, except withdraw from the base at Guantánamo.

Kennedy's interest in an accommodation with Castro registered forcefully on Jean Daniel, a French journalist on his way to Havana at the end of October of 1963. In a meeting with Daniel at the White House, Kennedy acknowledged a degree of U.S. responsibility for the miseries inflicted on the Cuban people by Castro's predecessor, Fulgencio Batista, whose government was propped up by the United States. When Daniel asked Kennedy about the economic embargo of Cuba, the President replied that he might lift it if Castro ended communist incitements in the region. Kennedy asked Daniel to see him again after returning from Cuba. "Castro's reactions interest me," he said, according to Daniel.

Castro welcomed the chance to open discussions with the United States, but insisted that they occur in Cuba. He did not wish to be seen as in any way soliciting U.S. friendship. Nor did the Kennedy Administration want to be seen as solicitous of Cuba. Robert Kennedy told Attwood that the Administration could not risk accusations that it was trying to make a deal with Castro.

In November, as the two sides debated where to hold discussions, the President gave a speech in Miami, before the Inter-American Press Association, that included veiled references to an altered relationship with Cuba. He said that Latin America's problems would not be solved "simply by complaining about Castro, by blaming all problems on



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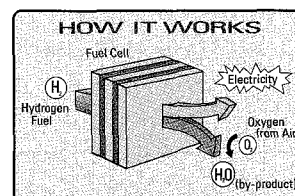
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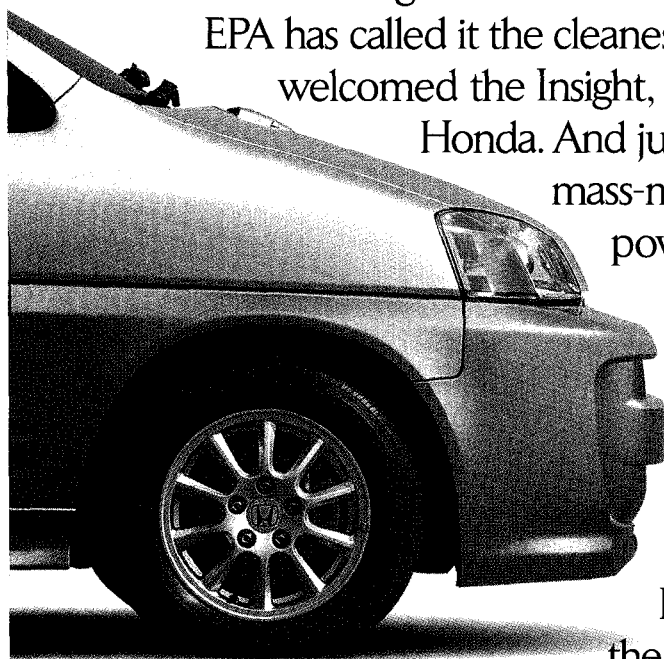
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communism, or generals, or nationalism." So long as Cuba remained "a weapon in an effort dictated by external powers to subvert the other American republics," a reconciliation would be impossible. Absent this impediment, he said, "everything is possible."

Whatever the uncertainties in November of 1963 about future Castro-Kennedy dealings, the two leaders had signaled a mutual interest in finding a way through their antagonism.

As for Vietnam, what Kennedy would have done after November of 1963 now seems increasingly clear, thanks not only to the testimony of his former aides but also to a growing documentary public record. Here, too, his wariness of his military chiefs' advice had begun to shape his outlook.

Most of his advisers in the Pentagon wanted to increase U.S. involvement in Vietnam's civil war. But Kennedy would have preferred a settlement like the one he had reached in Laos, whereby Moscow and Washington agreed to restrain the factions battling for control of the country. With Hanoi and Saigon unwilling to reach a truce, U.S. fears of losing South Vietnam to communism forced Kennedy to escalate America's economic and military commitments—providing Ngo Dinh Diem's regime with more money, equipment, and advisers to fight the Vietcong. Still, any suggestion that the conflict should become a war fought principally by U.S. troops was directly at odds with Kennedy's convictions about America's self-interest.

Admittedly, Kennedy wanted a military tool with which to combat communist insurgencies in Asia and Latin America. The creation of the Green Berets, in 1961, to meet the communist threat in Vietnam and elsewhere, was an indication of how determined he was to use limited force in the contest with Moscow for Third World client states. It is true, too, that the Kennedy Administration repeatedly announced America's determination to preserve South Vietnam's independence. In February of 1962 Robert Kennedy declared, "We are going to win in Vietnam. We will remain here until we do win." And JFK was willing to subsidize the expansion of the South Vietnamese military and to have more than 16,000 members of the U.S. military advising and directing Vietnamese combat operations—a project that would cost some American lives. Moreover, in August of 1963 Kennedy reluctantly signed off on a plot to have Vietnamese generals overthrow Diem's government, which had lost popular support and seemed certain to lose the civil war. But although all this risked greater U.S. responsibility for the fate of South Vietnam, Kennedy did not see it as leading—and certainly did not want it to lead—to the Americanization of the war. Indeed, his support for a coup rested on the hope that it would help South Vietnam to defeat the Vietcong and would greatly reduce the need for ongoing military support. And public statements like RFK's were more a device for

bolstering Saigon's morale and intimidating the communists than a reliable expression of intentions—as the President's actions in Vietnam, especially in 1963, would show.

Kennedy had seen the Boer War, the Russo-Finnish conflict, and the Korean War as cautionary tales against getting bogged down in Cuba; now he perceived that the lessons of those wars applied even more strongly in Vietnam, a less familiar, more distant land with political crosscurrents even more formidable than those presented by Havana. He feared that U.S. involvement would produce irresistible pressure to do more and more. "The troops will march in; the bands will play; the crowds will cheer," he told Arthur Schlesinger, "and in four days everyone will have forgotten. Then we will be told we have to send in more troops. It's like taking a drink. The effect wears off, and you have to take another."

Throughout his tenure in the White House, Kennedy consistently resisted proposals to have U.S. forces take over the war. In November of 1961 Maxwell Taylor, a Kennedy military confidant, reported at a meeting of Administration and military officials that Kennedy was "instinctively against introduction of U.S. forces." According to notes taken at a meeting of the National Security Council that same month, Kennedy "expressed the fear of becoming involved simultaneously on two fronts on opposite sides of the world," and "questioned the wisdom of involvement in Viet Nam since the basis thereof is not completely clear." JFK thought that whereas in Korea the United States had responded to a case of clear aggression, the conflict in Vietnam was, according to the NSC notes, "more obscure and less flagrant." He believed that any unilateral commitment on our part would produce "sharp domestic partisan criticism as well as strong objections from other nations ... [and] could even make leading Democrats wary of proposed activities in the Far East."

From the summer of 1962 to the fall of 1963 Kennedy directed Robert McNamara to chart plans for a systematic withdrawal from Vietnam by 1965. Possibly as a concession to his own reluctance to abandon South Vietnam before its survival was assured, McNamara drew up a five-year schedule for the reduction of U.S. forces. He did not anticipate a full departure until 1968, when he expected to remove the last 1,500 advisers and reduce military aid to \$40.8 million—less than a quarter of the sum spent in 1962.

Further evidence of Kennedy's intentions toward Vietnam comes in a backhanded but telling way from his dealings with the U.S. press corps in Saigon. The conventional wisdom is that Kennedy tried to censor news stories from Vietnam for fear that they would turn American public opinion against the war effort. And the press was indeed critical of the Administration's determination to hide the extent of U.S. involvement and its inability either to discourage Diem from repressing Buddhist dissenters or to compel him to fight the North Vietnamese aggressively. But

the real reason Kennedy was intent on repressing these negative reports was not to prevent the spread of anti-war sentiment but, rather, to avert demands for escalation.

According to poll data from the period, few Americans were following the situation in Vietnam. By 1962 Kennedy had decided that to sustain what he believed was the proper level of commitment in the region—enough to keep South Vietnam afloat without any involvement of U.S. troops or direct military action—he needed to keep public attention to a minimum. He recognized that public debate might arouse the political left to call for total withdrawal. But the greater danger, he seemed to believe, was that people would think America was fighting too halfheartedly: press accounts that called attention to the U.S. military's limited advisory role might lead evangelical anti-communists on the political right to demand that involvement be increased.

In April of 1962 Averell Harriman, the assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, directed the U.S. embassy in Saigon to lower America's profile in the conflict as much as possible. The press had begun describing the struggle as more an American than a Vietnamese war. The names of combat operations, such as "Sunrise" and "Farmgate," suggested U.S. planning, and American advisers were making themselves too conspicuous. Reports that a large group of U.S. colonels and civilians had inspected a stockade in Operation Sunrise were a case in point. "Why do large groups of Americans inspect anything?" Harriman asked in a memo. Moreover, U.S. officers were talking too freely about their role in planning operations. "It cannot be overstressed," Harriman declared, "that the conduct and utterances public and private of all U.S. personnel must reflect the basic policy of this government that we are in full support of Viet-Nam but we do not assume responsibility for Viet-Nam's war with the Viet Cong."

In September of 1963 Kennedy was still trying to avert widespread public discussion of America's role in the conflict. He instructed the State Department's public-affairs officer, Robert Manning, to avoid press interviews and television appearances on the subject. When Manning reported in a memo to Kennedy that Roger Hilsman, the director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence, had been turning down calls from the press and TV stations, the President agreed that was wise.

In October, Kennedy asked Arthur Sulzberger, the newly appointed publisher of *The New York Times*, to remove the reporter David Halberstam from Saigon, where Halberstam was writing irrefutable accounts of U.S.-South Vietnamese failings in the war and implying that greater American involvement was necessary. (Halberstam, although he would

later turn against the war, took the same position in his 1965 book *The Making of a Quagmire*.) Sulzberger refused.

Had Kennedy believed that it was more essential to stop a communist advance in Vietnam than to restrict America's part in the fighting, he surely would have touted the Administration's efforts to preserve Saigon's autonomy—and would have been more supportive of Halberstam and other reporters in their efforts to make the case for more-effective U.S. involvement. As a student of America's role in World Wars I and II and Korea, Kennedy knew that fighting a costly foreign war depended on steady public commitment, which could come only after convincing Americans of the country's vital stake in the conflict. The converse, as he saw it, given the political context, was that obscuring America's role and muting public discussion would help him to preserve the flexibility to reduce U.S. involvement or maintain it at the same level. (This is what Lyndon Johnson failed to understand. He, too, suppressed information about what the United States was doing in Indochina, but he did so in the mistaken belief that it would make it easier for him to intensify U.S. involvement. His effort to pursue this course without adequate public support ultimately doomed his presidency.)

In the State Department "I just see an awful lot of fellows ... who don't seem to have *cojones*," Kennedy said. "[Whereas] the Defense Department ... haven't any brains."

After the November 1963 coup in Saigon that took Diem's life, Kennedy regretted encouraging an action that, he now believed, would deepen rather than reduce U.S. participation in Vietnamese affairs. In a tape recording made in the Oval

Office on November 4, he said, "I feel that we [at the White House] must bear a good deal of responsibility for it, beginning with our cable of early August in which we suggested the coup. In my judgment that wire was badly drafted. It should never have been sent on a Saturday. I should not have given my consent to it without a roundtable conference at which McNamara and Taylor could have presented their views. While we did redress that balance in later wires, that first wire encouraged [Ambassador Henry Cabot] Lodge along a course to which he was in any case inclined ... The question now is whether the generals can stay together and build a stable government or whether ... public opinion in Saigon, the intellectuals, students, et cetera, will turn on this government as repressive and undemocratic in the not too distant future." More than ever, Kennedy seemed to feel that U.S. involvement in so unstable a country was a poor idea.

In an undated, unsigned memo in the President's office files from the late summer or fall of 1963 (possibly even after November 1), an Administration official provided "Observations on Vietnam and Cuba." Since the Soviets seemed to feel trapped in Cuba and we in Vietnam, this

official asked, might it not make sense to invite Charles de Gaulle, the President of France, who maintained calculated relations with both Cold War superpowers, to propose a swap with the Soviets? (In other words, in exchange for the Soviets' leaving Cuba, the Americans would leave Vietnam.) Whether Kennedy ever saw this memo, or what reaction he might have had to it, is unknown. Nonetheless, it is clear that by November of 1963 Kennedy welcomed suggestions for an alternative to a Vietnam policy that had had limited success. On November 20, the day before he left on his fateful trip to Texas, Kennedy told Michael Forrestal, a senior staff member on the National Security Council and an assistant to the President on Far Eastern affairs, that at the start of 1964 he wanted him to organize "an in-depth study of every possible option we've got in Vietnam, including how to get out of there." He said, "We have to review this whole thing from the bottom to the top."

FIRST PANTOUM OF SUMMER

One sleep depletes, another fills the well.
Our night's companion shapes the coming day.
My bed this morning grew drafty as a cell
When you took off for town. I couldn't stay.

Our night's companion shapes the coming day,
And where we make our bed can make us weep.
When you took off for town, I couldn't stay.
I fell into these words—a second sleep.

Where we make our bed can make us weep
Or leave us clean and clear and ravenous.
I fell into these words—a second sleep,
A summer sleep, the windows generous.

You left me clean and clear and ravenous.
I drank new air, a warm and welcome stream
Of summer sleep, the windows generous.
Here or away, you lead me out of dream.

I drank new air, a warm and welcome stream.
My bed this morning grew drafty as a cell.
Here or away, you lead me out of dream.
One sleep depletes, another fills the well.

—ERICA FUNKHOUSER

Erica Funkhouser teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her fourth book of poetry, Pursuit, was published last year.

If Kennedy was opposed to a substantially larger U.S. role in the war, why did LBJ believe that he was simply following JFK's lead by escalating U.S. involvement? He believed it because Kennedy had significantly increased U.S. commitments during his presidency, and because three of Kennedy's principal foreign-policy advisers, Rusk, McNamara, and Bundy, departing from what Kennedy's final posture had been, told Johnson that expanded involvement would have been JFK's choice. More important, Johnson enlarged the U.S. role because he could not walk away from the conflict as Kennedy could have done, given enough time. By November of 1963 recent events had eclipsed memories of Kennedy's stumbling efforts at the Bay of Pigs and in Vienna. In fact, his record of success in the missile crisis and in the negotiation of a test-ban treaty with Moscow in the summer of 1963—a process he cut his military advisers out of—gave him considerable personal standing as a foreign-policy leader. Pulling back from Vietnam would not have undermined international or domestic confidence in Kennedy's direction of foreign affairs, especially given that poll data from as late as April of 1964 showed only 37 percent of the American public paying any attention to developments in Vietnam. Even in the spring and summer of 1965, after Johnson had begun a systematic bombing campaign and had dispatched 100,000 soldiers to the region, few Americans expected to see a victory in South Vietnam. In April of that year 45 percent of Americans polled predicted that a neutral or pro-communist government would take control of Saigon within the next five years; only 22 percent believed that Saigon would remain on Washington's side. By August most Americans assumed that the war would end with a compromise or, like the Korean War, with a negotiated settlement. In short, if a second-term Kennedy Administration had withdrawn U.S. fighting forces from Vietnam in 1965, few Americans would have felt that the United States had forfeited a chance at victory.

Johnson, in contrast, had few credentials as a world statesman and did not think he could deal effectively with communist adversaries abroad or conservative critics at home if he retreated from a Cold War challenge in Vietnam. When his need to demonstrate his foreign-policy toughness was coupled with his sincere belief in a war he saw as essential to containing communism, the result was a foreign-policy disaster.

In counterfactual history nothing is certain. But we do know that in November of 1963 Kennedy was strongly leaning both toward reducing tensions with Castro and against expanding commitments in Vietnam. And most historians agree that Kennedy, like Johnson, would have faced Barry Goldwater in the 1964 election and defeated him by a wide margin, just as Johnson did. This would have given Kennedy, now free from concern about re-election, the mandate to make a bold foreign-policy change while staring down his military advisers. ▀

Robert Dallek, the author of a two-volume biography of Lyndon Johnson, is a professor of history at Boston University. This article is drawn from An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy 1917–1963, to be published this month by Little, Brown.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

PHOTOGRAPHY, FORGERY, AND THE LEWIS HINE SCANDAL

The theoretical physicist who ignited the biggest firestorm in the history of the American photography market was simply trying to figure out if his vintage photos were genuine. By the time he learned the answer, two of the country's best-known photography scholars had come under a cloud of suspicion

BY RICHARD B. WOODWARD

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Art forgery is a peculiar crime. Reliant on camouflage and deception, on the rhetoric of the believable lie, it is an act both audacious and self-effacing. For the imitation to succeed in fooling us, it must resemble one or more things that we have been led to believe are undoctored originals. Without something to mimic, the fake could not exist. And the forger of old masters' drawings, like the forger of twenty-dollar bills or U.S. passports, must be skilled enough to fool eyes that by now are practiced at uncovering deceit.

Like spies, forgers often go undetected for years. No one motive directs their actions. Some seek only money, preying on the hapless and uninformed. Others take pride in their skill, targeting museums in the hope of sneaking their manufactures into exhibition catalogues and mingling spurious creations with legitimate masterworks. Revenge against an indifferent or hypocritical art world may be involved. The Hungarian forger Elmyr de Hory confessed to feeling deep satisfaction at watching art dealers who had disdained the works he painted under his own name rush to buy those he painted under a more famous, if false, signature. Forgery can be both a crime against art and a private joke.

To copy a master's work was for centuries basic to a young artist's education. But imitation is not always flattery. Albrecht Dürer, the sixteenth-century German painter and printmaker, sued an Italian artist for copying his prints and signature without permission—the first recorded case of art forgery settled through the courts. Now, when a previously unknown Rembrandt turns up for sale, experts are called to verify the claim. Spectrographic tests can be run on pigment, ground, sizing, and canvas to date materials. The provenance of a work is checked. Anyone with access to a specialist's art library can pull down a volume that shows changes in Rembrandt's autograph over his lifetime. Two and a half centuries of classical-art scholarship have given curators an array of reliable tools with which to assess

whether a sculpture is a Greek original, a Roman copy, or a latter-day forgery.

But in the fine-art photography market—smaller than the painting, sculpture, and drawing markets, and only about twenty-five years old—safeguards are fewer. Even though photographs have lately become glamorous and often expensive (a Man Ray sold privately in 1999 for upwards of a million dollars, and images by contemporary artists such as Cindy Sherman and Andreas Gursky have sold for \$250,000 to \$610,000 at contemporary-art auctions over the past several years), only a few books can be consulted to settle questions about materials and practices. It is still not possible, for example, to date with certainty a Mathew Brady photograph, whereas a drawing attributed to Titian can be subjected to a battery of widely accepted scientific tests.

Moreover, notions of what constitutes value in fine-art photography are notably subjective. When the photography market was born, in New York in the mid-1970s, the concept of "vintage" prints boosted its growth. These were the select few prints—or perhaps the only one—developed by the photographer immediately or soon after he made the negative, and often signed. Although the concept can be seen as little more than a marketing strategy to avert profligate reproduction, most collectors, dealers, curators, and auction houses came to agree that vintage prints should, if all else is equal, be deemed intrinsically more valuable than subsequent prints made from the same negative, whether by the photographer in later life or posthumously.

This hierarchy has a certain logic. Usually, vintage prints are rarer, and rarer is almost always better in the art market. Less logical is the romantic belief that these prints more truly reflect the intentions of a photographer. Even if an artist's darkroom technique or equipment improved in later life, as happened frequently, the first drafts supposedly bring viewers closer to the moment of creation.

This notion, however, raises a host of questions about what kind of creation a photograph really is. What constitutes the “original” in photography? Is it the negative template or the positive print? Does the value of an art photograph derive from the framing of the picture in the viewfinder, or from the magical blending and separation of tones in the darkroom? If someone makes a contemporary print from the original negative and then falsely sells that print as vintage, is this thing a “forgery”? Or should it be called something else—something less damning?

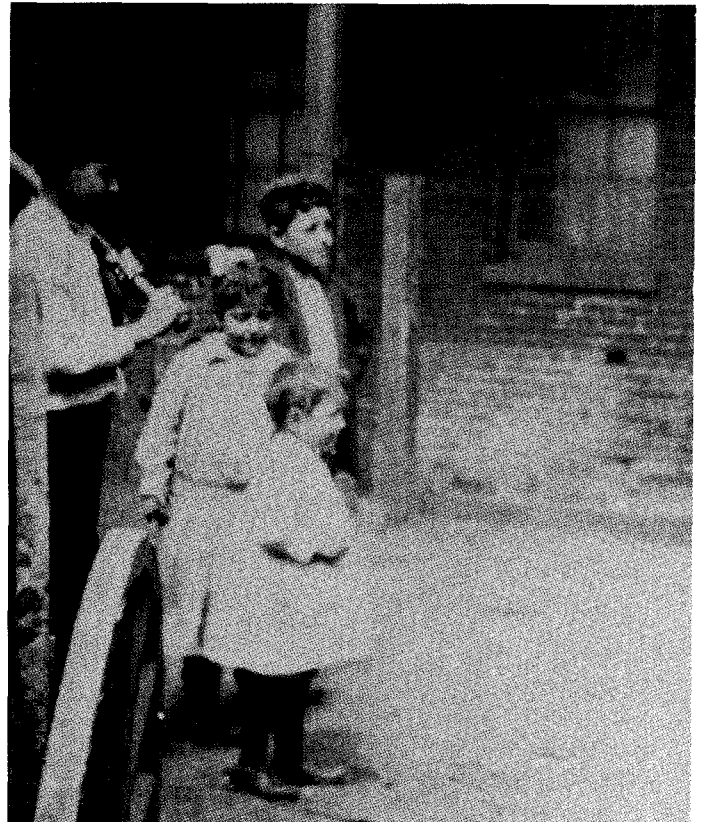
The question of forgery in photography has of late become more than an academic issue. Prices for vintage prints accelerated so wildly in the 1990s that one of these photographs might fetch a hundred times as much as a non-vintage print of the same image. It was perhaps only a matter of time before a canny soul took advantage of the discrepancy—and of the huge gaps in scholarly knowledge—to peddle newly created vintage prints for profit.

In fact, a market manipulation of this sort had already occurred. Appearing like an avatar of Walter Benjamin’s “age of mechanical reproduction,” a charlatan using the impish pseudonym Benjamin Walter—and operating in Paris, no less—made a killing by selling bogus vintage works by Man Ray to a number of clients. Apparently printed from Man Ray’s original negatives, Walter’s fakes were so luscious in tone that for years they fooled some of the smartest people in the field. The curator Maria Morris Hambourg, who heads the photographs department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was prepared to make them the backbone of a Man Ray retrospective until she noticed an anachronistic stamp on the photographic paper—a clue that they were likely not vintage prints.

These ersatz Man Rays from Europe first revealed the vulnerability of the high-end photography market to fraud. But an all-American scandal involving certain prints by Lewis Hine created a shock wave.

Photographs by Hine, a pioneer of early-twentieth-century social documentary who is best known for his melancholy child-labor and Ellis Island portraits and his stunning pictures of workers atop the Empire State Building during its construction, have never reached the price levels of photographs by Man Ray or Alfred Stieglitz. Hine, who didn’t presume to be an artist, died broke in 1940. But for almost forty years his works have been perennials at auction, and prices for his vintage pictures rose steeply in the 1990s; \$10,000 was a common price, and some pictures commanded as much as \$50,000.

In October of 1999 the Association of International Photography Art Dealers sent its membership a bulletin suggesting that a number of these Hines were of dubious authenticity. Word soon circulated that at least as troubling was their source: none other than Walter Rosenblum, a revered photographer and teacher who had been—along with his wife, the art historian Naomi Rosenblum—a pillar



Lewis Hine at work (c. 1910), photographer unknown

of New York’s photography community for decades. Both were Hine experts, called upon by dealers and auction houses to verify the dates and authorship of prints; and both are now suspected of having known that Hine photographs from their collection, which they sold as vintage or lifetime prints, were made after Hine’s death—perhaps by Walter Rosenblum himself.

Walter Rosenblum has said that he did not print the disputed photographs and was not aware of any deception. But in the fall of 1999 a group of dealers—Edwynn Houk, Howard Greenberg, and Robert Mann, of New York; Stephen Cohen and Peter Fetterman, of California; and Tom Halsted, of Michigan—demanded reimbursement if it could be proved that the Hines they bought from Rosenblum as prints made by the photographer himself were not. (The dispute was handled out of court. All parties are barred by a nondisclosure agreement from speaking to the press.) From 1979 to 1999 as many as 500 Hines may have passed through Rosenblum’s hands and into the art market—photographs he sold or gave to private clients and curators, or to a group of primary dealers who then resold them to their clients, including secondary dealers who resold them to *their* clients, and so on, a branching tree of buyers and sellers who shelled out millions of dollars altogether. “In a way it’s more serious and wide-ranging than the Man Ray scandal,” says Denise Bethel, who heads the photography department at Sotheby’s, in New York, “because we still don’t know the extent of it.”

GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE



THE DEALER AND THE EXPERTS

Many people in the field of fine-art photography would love to put the story of the phony Lewis Hine prints behind them, and for many different reasons. High on the list of people are the three eminent New York dealers who did a brisk trade with Walter Rosenblum over a number of years and were parties to the aforementioned dispute against him.

Edwynn Houk operates a quietly spectacular gallery (frosted glass, brushed aluminum, leather chairs, muted tones) on Fifth Avenue, just north of Fifty-seventh Street. His roster of artists includes Sally Mann and Annie Leibovitz, and he represents the estates of Brassai, Bill Brandt, and Dorothea Lange.

Howard Greenberg, in SoHo, one of the best-liked dealers in the business, specializes in vintage twentieth-century prints and is a primary source for work from the estates of Edward Steichen, André Kertész, Ben Shahn, Imogen Cunningham, and James Van Der Zee, among many others.

Robert Mann opened a cavernous space two years ago in Chelsea, the New York neighborhood to which contemporary-art dealers gravitated in the late 1990s after SoHo rents shot up. The best-known artist he handles exclusively may be the influential color landscape photographer Richard Misrach, but he also represents the estates of Aaron Siskind and O. Winston Link, the master of American train photography.

These dealers not only have suffered embarrassment (along with the rancor of clients, including other dealers,

who want their money back), but also are under suspicion of having looked the other way. In the eyes of some of their peers, they must have—or should have—known that far too many pristine “vintage” Hine prints of the same images kept coming on the market from the collection of Walter and Naomi Rosenblum. The claim that Houk, Mann, Greenberg, and the others made against Walter Rosenblum doesn’t exculpate them as enablers in this mess. “I find it hard to understand how the brightest dealers in the field, the ones with the most experience and the biggest galleries, could all have been duped,” says one photography dealer, who wishes to remain anonymous.

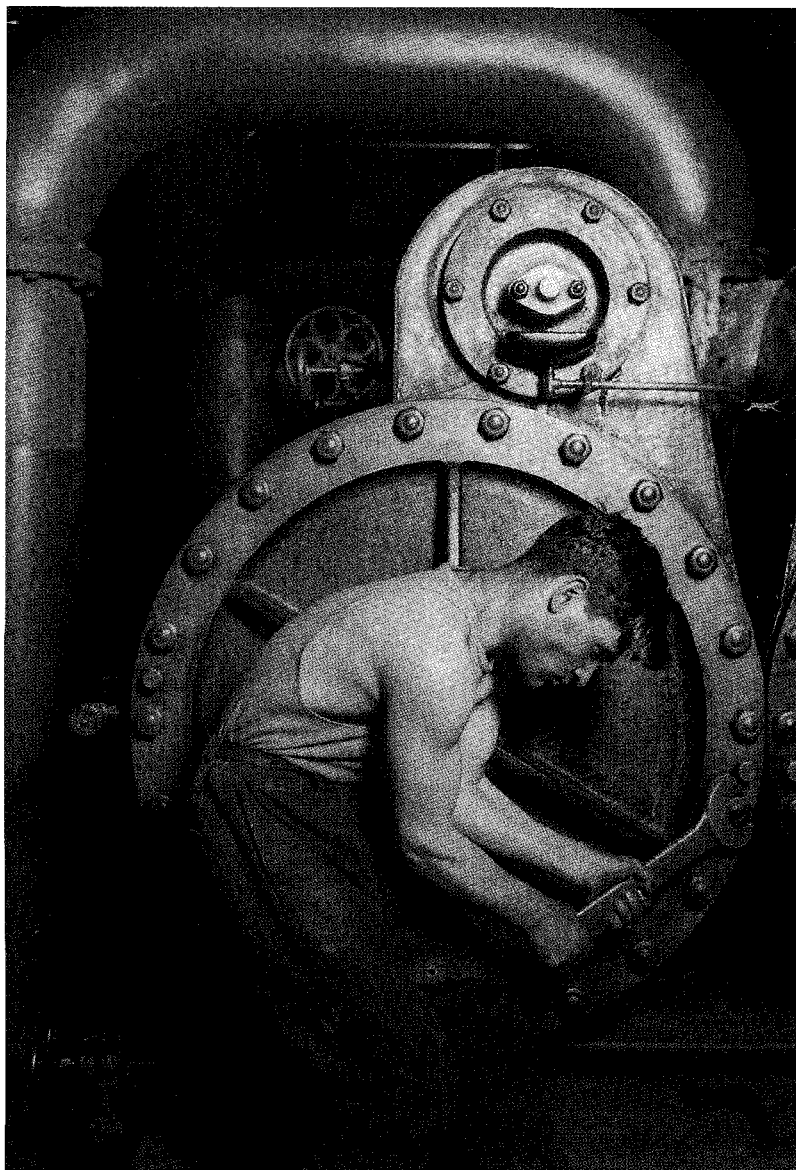
Students and academic colleagues of the Rosenblums are not eager to discuss the story. Many remain stunned. “My reaction when I heard the news was utter and complete sadness,” says Alan Trachtenberg, a professor emeritus of American studies at Yale. “That feeling hasn’t worn off.” Unlike the mysterious Benjamin Walter, the Rosenblums have enjoyed lustrous public reputations. Thousands have sat in their seminars and lectures over the past half century.

Walter Rosenblum, now eighty-three, taught photography at Brooklyn College for more than forty years, and ran the department for twenty; he has done guest stints at Yale and elsewhere. During World War II he served with distinction, earning a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, and a Purple Heart. An artist whose work combines the social-crusading subject matter of Hine with the impeccable print polish of his friend Paul Strand, he has exhibited his own photographs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York; at the J. Paul Getty Museum, in Los Angeles; and throughout Europe.

Naomi is the author of *A World History of Photography* (1984) and *A History of Women Photographers* (1994), standard texts in art-history courses. Among the first to earn a Ph.D. in art history for a dissertation on a photographer (hers was on Strand), she has taught the history of photography at universities across the United States and Europe, with a base at Brooklyn College and the City University of New York.

Married for more than fifty years, the Rosenblums have both written extensively on Hine, arguing for his importance to American photography. (“I think of Walter as the guy who saved Lewis Hine’s work,” says Richard Benson, the dean of the Yale University School of Art.) They co-authored, with Trachtenberg, the book *America and Lewis Hine* (1977), and their vast collection of his photographs served as the core of a Hine retrospective at the Brooklyn Museum in 1977. Acclaimed by Hilton Kramer, in *The New York Times*, and Robert Hughes, in *Time*, among many others, the exhibition was the first one to travel from an American museum to the People’s Republic of China.

For their years of devotion to photography the Rosenblums have been honored at the highest levels. In 1990 the J. Paul Getty Center chose them as scholars-in-residence; in 1998 they received the Infinity Award from New York’s International Center of Photography, that institution’s highest tribute.



Powerhouse Mechanic (early 1920s), also known as The Steamfitter

Some feel that to prosecute a grandfatherly octogenarian who has dedicated his life to photography is unseemly. "This is all about stockbrokers making a lot of money from investing in photographs," says Michaela Murphy, a photographer and master printer. "They're crucifying an old man for their own ignorance." At least one photography critic, Vince Aletti, of the *Village Voice*, has chosen not to write about the suspected misdeeds of the Rosenblums out of affection for the couple. He says, "Walter's always been extremely kind to me. I didn't want to do him any more harm."

But one person unafraid to point the finger at the Rosenblums is a forty-two-year-old photography collector and former Los Alamos physicist named Michael Mattis. In October of 1999 Mattis reached an out-of-court settlement with the Rosenblums over three Hines sold to him as signed lifetime prints that turned out to have been printed posthumously. His proof for this—established by a group of paper conservators who devised tests to date twentieth-century

photographs—was the foundation for the claim the six dealers brought. More than anyone else, Mattis has pushed the story forward; and unlike most of the other players in it, he is not bound by a nondisclosure agreement.

With his wire-rim spectacles and ear-to-ear beard, Mattis looks like a studious leprechaun. One photography dealer has called him "the hippie rabbi." But above all, he is a savant who can't hide his suspicion that he's smarter than his interlocutors.

Which, in all likelihood, he is. Mattis took his Ph.D. in physics from Stanford at the age of twenty-five. He was the Enrico Fermi fellow at the University of Chicago, and for a number of years the J. Robert Oppenheimer fellow at Los Alamos National Laboratories, where he did research in particle theory as a member of the staff until 2000. For the past ten years he has worked at the outer limits of mathematical physics, on, among other things, superstring theory, which seeks to reconcile quantum theory and relativity to produce a "theory of everything."

Mattis now spends his time researching photography collections and curating shows drawn from his own holdings. His wife, Judith Hochberg, who also has a Ph.D. (in linguistics) from Stanford, works at IBM; they live in Westchester County, New York, and both devote great effort and income to buying photographs, a passion they nurtured in the early 1980s while both were at Stanford.

The two own more than 10,000 photographs. Such a huge collection almost necessarily varies widely in value and rarity.

Among the most valuable photographs are eight vintage prints by Diane Arbus; others include vintage prints by Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, Margaret Bourke-White, and, of course, Lewis Hine.

"It's the real thing, vintage, we had it tested," Mattis told me when I visited him two years ago, pointing at a large bronze-toned print from Hine's Empire State Building series. "Note the signature, in *white ink*, in *block letters*, on the *front* of the photograph." (Many of the Hine prints that came from Walter Rosenblum, Mattis has found, have a cursive signature, in pencil or gray ink, on the back.)

The story of Mattis, Hochberg, and the Rosenblums began in December of 1988, when Mattis and Hochberg bought their first two Hines through a dealer in Los Angeles (one of the six who made the demand against the Rosenblums). Both images now rank among the photographer's most famous: *Powerhouse Mechanic* (a.k.a. *The Steamfitter*), circa the early 1920s, which shows a muscular young man

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in a singlet bending at the waist and holding a wrench to a bolt on a steam turbine; and *Steelworkers at a Russian Boarding House*, circa 1908, a group portrait of six handsome, moustachioed men in Pennsylvania. A year later Mattis and Hochberg acquired another well-known Hine, *Three Riveters, Empire State Building*, circa 1931, through another dealer. They were thrilled by the quality of the material. "We knew that Hine belonged to the pantheon of great photographers, but the prints we had seen at auction or at other dealers hadn't appealed to us," Mattis says. "There hadn't been a body of beautiful prints like these. The market needed them. We thought they were amazing."

They ranged from \$5,000 to \$15,000 each and were signed "Hine" on the back. What's more, all bore the stamp "Photograph by Lewis W. Hine from the Walter & Naomi Rosenblum Collection." To Mattis, this was the clincher: "It was the best possible provenance, from the two top scholars of Hine."

Mattis was already familiar with the images he and Hochberg had bought, because all three had been reproduced in Naomi Rosenblum's *A World History of Photography*, which has a special section on Hine. No other photographer in the book's 671 pages—not Brady, Stieglitz, Steichen, Strand, Weston, Adams, or Henri Cartier-Bresson—receives such lavish pictorial attention. Among the eleven Hine photographs reproduced is a full-page *Powerhouse Mechanic*. According to the credits next to the pictures, all came from a private collection. Mattis remembers thinking, perhaps naively, that having bought prints previously owned by Walter and Naomi Rosenblum, he probably now owned "the vintage photographs used for that book."

Hine made more than half a dozen negatives of the image later known as *Powerhouse Mechanic*. Some of these he printed and exhibited in his lifetime. Legitimate examples can be found at the Library of Congress and in the Ford Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But in those prints that came from Rosenblum the figure is angled differently. To confuse matters further, Eastman House made Hine portfolios in the 1970s to raise money. The portfolios included a print of *Powerhouse Mechanic* from a negative later accidentally destroyed.

The years 1989 to 1991 saw the dealers Houk, Greenberg, and Mann bring large numbers of Hine prints, mostly bought from Rosenblum, to the market in New York. Many prints went to other dealers; some were put up for auction. Mattis and Hochberg acquired several—including *New York From the Empire State Building*—from the Robert Miller Gallery, in New York.

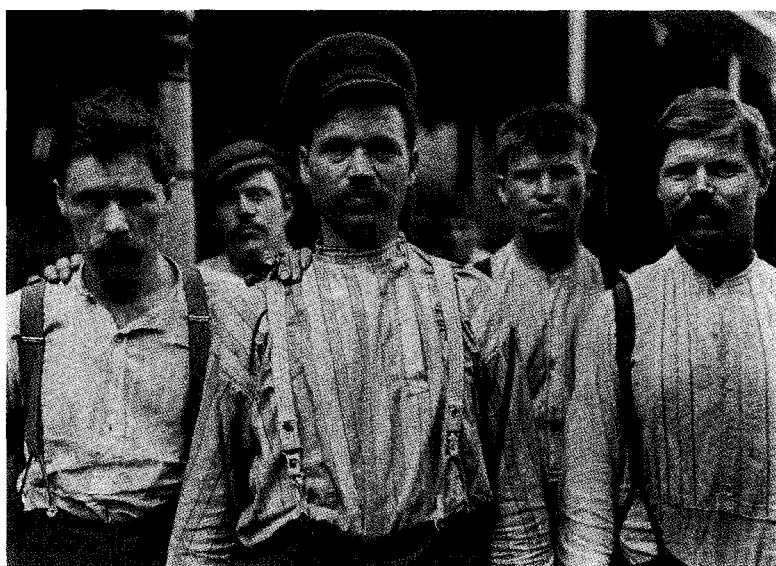
But as the nineties wore on, the couple began to harbor doubts about their first three. "We started to see *Powerhouse Mechanics* and

Steelworkers everywhere," Hochberg recalls. "And they didn't look as old as they were supposed to." Mattis agrees, adding, "But ours came with a story. They came from Walter and Naomi Rosenblum." To explain the large numbers of prints, often of the same images, that have come from his collection, Walter Rosenblum has actually told several stories. One version has Hine, the year before he died, reproducing many of his favorite images for a 1939 retrospective at the now vanished Riverside Museum, in New York. Rosenblum also claims that as a young man at the Photo League, an organization of socially conscious photographers, he aided Hine in the darkroom and received a group of prints, presumably from this retrospective, as a reward. In a letter accompanying a donation of twelve Hine photographs to the Fogg Art Museum in 1979, Rosenblum wrote, "Some of them are from the last batch of prints that he made before he died."

The catalogue of the 1939 exhibition, however, a copy of which exists in the Brooklyn Museum library, never mentions either *Powerhouse Mechanic* or *Steelworkers*.

Another story of Rosenblum's has him taking some prints that Hine had bequeathed to the Photo League. As the League's president, Rosenblum helped in the early 1950s to organize the remains of Hine's enormous and chaotic output. After the League closed its doors, Rosenblum moved the Hine archives from one New York City address to another until 1955, when, he claims, he turned over all the Hine material (just over 6,000 prints and almost 4,000 negatives) to the George Eastman House, in Rochester.

According to Anne Tucker, the curator of photography at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and a scholar of the Photo League's history, members may have helped themselves to Hine prints after his death, because "they loved him and his work." The art world didn't care about the prints; they weren't valuable. Tucker has more trouble believing the first story: she finds it unlikely that Rosenblum aided the master in the darkroom ("Walter sat at the front



Steelworkers at a Russian Boarding House (c. 1908)

desk. He was an office boy”) or that Hine made additional prints in his last years. “He was completely broke,” she says. “He couldn’t afford to keep his house, much less buy boxes of photographic paper to make lots of expensive prints. Who would he have been making them for anyway? There was no market.”

Throughout the mid-1990s Mattis heard a rising chorus of grumblings at auction previews about “too many prints.” “There were rumors,” he admits. “But people could dismiss them as sour grapes from dealers who had been cut out of the sales. There was no proof. And not all the prints that came from Walter have turned out to be posthumous, by the way.” Still, that anyone visiting certain galleries in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, or Atlanta could open a drawer and find one—or two or three—*Powerhouse Mechanics*, usually signed and in superb condition, was troubling. Even if some were being sold as “lifetime” rather than “vintage” prints, the sheer numbers should have set off alarm bells. One dealer has estimated that thirty or more *Powerhouse Mechanics* may have come from Rosenblum over the years.

“Signed vintage photographs are rare,” says Mattis, who buys them whenever possible. “They’re much rarer than lithographs. In lithographs you might have seventy-five copies of an image. Whereas you’re lucky to find two or three signed Westons of the same image. That’s one reason they’re so valuable.”

Another factor casting doubt on the authenticity of all these “vintage” Hines is that many look eerily like Rosenblum’s own photographs. The Chicago dealer Alan Koppel first pointed out the likeness, to the Santa Fe dealer Andrew Smith at an Association of International Photography Art Dealers show at the New York Hilton in February of 1999. Smith had a gorgeous print of Hine’s *Three Riveters* hanging in his booth. Koppel stopped by and observed that the Rosenblum photographs he had seen and the Hine prints that dealers had bought from the Rosenblums had a “similar tonality—the same clean, hard surface and cold grays.”

Back in Santa Fe a week after the show, wanting to confront his doubts, Smith wrote Rosenblum a letter asking bluntly, after some preliminaries, “Did you print Hine’s work from his negatives after his death? This is becoming an issue in the Hine market.” He never received a reply.

Smith also expressed his doubts about the pictures to Mattis, a client and a friend. Mattis did not take kindly to the suggestion that he might have been duped. “I had bought these pictures and hung them proudly on my wall,” he told me indignantly. “It would have been easy to do nothing and accept that they were printed by Hine. I told Andy these sub rosa innuendos were tantamount to slander. I got angry with him. I decided to take action to shut him up. I didn’t set out to destroy the reputation of the Rosenblums but to uphold it.” To silence the whispering campaign, though, Mattis needed a reliable method for dating photographic paper.

THE COLLECTORS AND THE SCIENTISTS

Mattis had no background in the forensics of photographic chemistry or paper, and no time to teach himself. His schedule was consumed with writing research papers and delivering them at university conferences. Whatever time he and his wife had left they spent collecting more photographs. But Mattis hoped to prevail on a forty-one-year-old paper conservator in Boston named Paul Messier to provide the answers he needed. “I had used him for some minor work in the past, like fixing dog-ears, and been very impressed,” Mattis says. “I’m not sure he would have taken the job, though, if he had known it would take years of his life.”

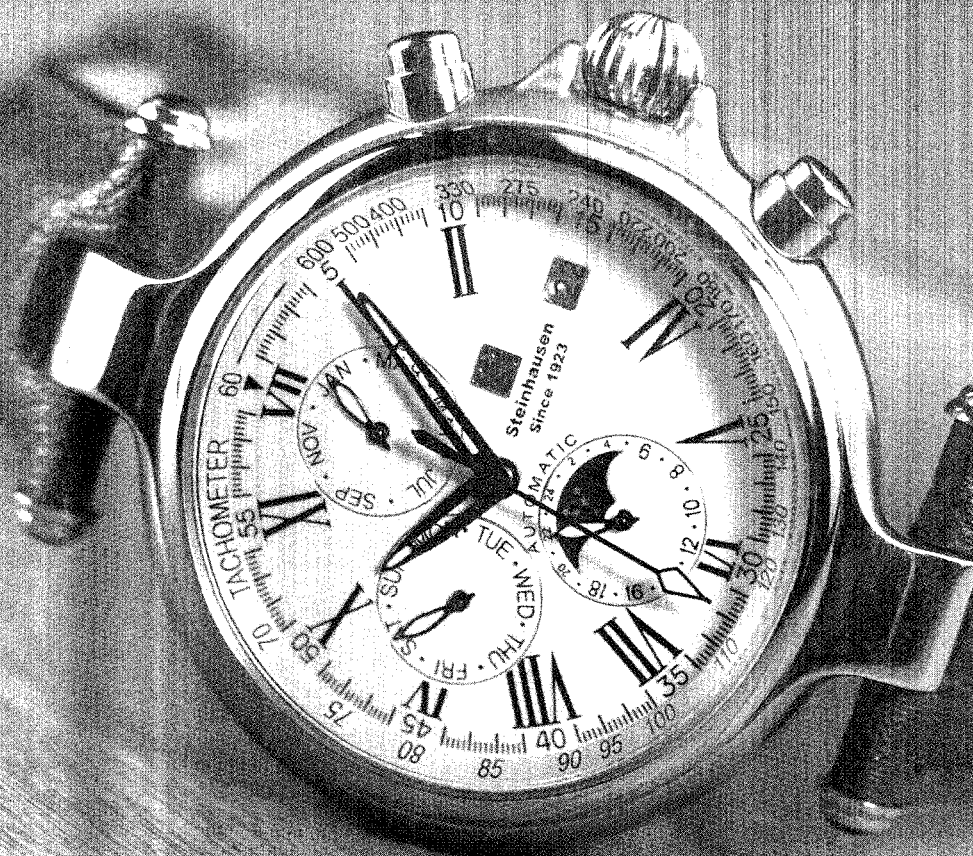
“Michael is an empiricist, and he thought there had to be some way to date these things that wasn’t based on subjective criteria,” says Messier, who seems as genial as Mattis is tightly wound. “But when he posed the question, I was ill prepared to answer. I called around to some people in forensics, and they didn’t know much more than I did. We didn’t have the tools. There was nothing really hard, a way to say yes, that’s the Kodak F surface from 1959.”

Traditionally the method for dating photographs has involved little more than studying the image for signs of age. “You look for yellowing of the highlights, edge fading,” Messier explains. The drawback, at least for dating twentieth-century black-and-white prints, is that the deterioration of any given print tends to level off over time, and darkroom techniques did not change radically during the century. All of which means that not even a trained eye can reliably distinguish a print seventy years old from one made forty years ago. Furthermore, different papers have gone in and out of favor, and companies such as Kodak and Agfa often guard as trade secrets data about the evolution of their products. “You’d think they’d have this stuff readily available, like wallpaper samples,” Mattis says.

Using a representative group of about a dozen Hine prints collected by Mattis, Messier pursued several avenues of investigation. Messier made a scan of the Agfa stamp on the back of one Hine print and sent it to Agfa. The company confirmed that this particular logo had not been stamped on its paper until the 1950s. About a third of Mattis’s sample group had this mark, indicating a problem.

Messier also got in touch with Valerie Baas, a conservator at the Detroit Institute of Arts, who had recently begun to research the use of optical brightening agents in photographic paper. “Think of a black-and-white photograph as having three parts,” Messier says. “On the bottom is the paper base; in the middle is the white-pigmented baryta layer; and on the top is the gelatin where the image-forming silver is dispersed. The color of the baryta has the most influence on the highlights of the photograph. The more optical brighteners you have in that layer, the more pop, snap, and contrast you get.”

Incorporating OBAs into photography became a goal of



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the industry in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The brighteners provided blinding-white highlights and also made the production of highlights cheaper, by allowing the use of less-refined paper pulp as a base. It was a manufacturer's dream: the papers rendered superior images and cost less. Adoption moved forward rapidly.

After chasing down current and former Kodak scientists and examining earlier research and paper archives, Baas was able to establish that OBAs had not been introduced into photographic paper until after 1955. Even better, a simple test could detect their presence: under ultraviolet light OBAs give off a cool, bluish glow. With the OBA solution in hand, Messier wondered if he could solve other date-related puzzles in photography. Paper experts directed him to Walter Rantanen, a paper-fiber specialist at Integrated Paper Services, in Appleton, Wisconsin. For more than half of his forty-seven years Rantanen has studied paper under a microscope. The supervisor of the fiber-science lab at IPS, he has in the past two years become, in Baas's words, "like a rock star to photography conservators, surrounded by groupies after he speaks." Rantanen is "even more of an empiricist than I am," Messier says admiringly. "For better or worse, I'm involved in the market. But Walter isn't from the world of fine-art photography. I've sent him prints by Man Ray and Walker Evans. He doesn't know what they are. He just looks at the paper sample and renders his judgment."

When I spoke with him, in 2001, Rantanen patiently talked me through the basics of his business and outlined the huge investigation he undertook at Messier's prompting. Rantanen created what may be the world's first chronology of photographic paper—a feat made possible by the fact that he has relatives as meticulous as he is. One of his uncles was an amateur photographer with pen pals around the world. In a set of twenty-eight albums going back to the early 1900s and ending at his death, in 1968, the uncle had kept careful records of when each picture—whether his own, a relative's, or a pen pal's—had been placed in the album. As a result, Rantanen had a very broad sample of photographic papers. "I went through the albums, taking a corner from a photograph from each specific period to look at fiber composition," Rantanen told me.

"He had this ready-made reference library for charting a chronology of photographic paper," Messier says with amazement. "Not only has he been able to discern the presence of bast and cotton fibers in the papers over the decades but he can tell the proportions of each, and of sulfites or sulfates, at various stages of paper-manufacturing history. It's a major achievement for the field."

Messier now had three guidelines for judging with some accuracy the age of a twentieth-century photographic paper: corporate logos, OBAs, and fiber composition. In March of 1999 he and Mattis put their samples, now twenty prints from various sources, to the test. "Despite our growing unease about the authenticity of the Hines, we were still

stunned when the results came back," Mattis says. "All of those that could be traced to the Rosenblums flunked at least two of the three major criteria. All the evidence said fake, fake, fake, fake."

But knowing now that his own Rosenblum-stamped prints were neither vintage nor lifetime, Mattis wanted to find out what the two most reputable names in Hine scholarship had to say for themselves. On April 19, 1999, he sent a letter by overnight mail to Naomi Rosenblum, telling her that three Hines with the Rosenblum-collection stamp on the back had been declared posthumous prints by a conservator. Mattis's tone was pleasant. He suggested that an inadvertent error had occurred. Perhaps, he wrote, the prints had come "off the 'wrong pile'" from among the Rosenblums' vast holdings of Hine. Rather than go back to the dealers from whom he had bought the prints, Mattis proposed, "Maybe I could trade them back to you and Walter, in exchange for some other pictures (not even necessarily by Hine)."

The next day an apologetic Walter Rosenblum called to suggest that Mattis and Hochberg come for a visit, so that the problem could be resolved.

LOOKING THE OTHER WAY

Mattis and Hochberg went to the Rosenblums' house, in Queens, on April 24, and their copious notes from the meeting are the only record currently available of Walter Rosenblum's response to questions about the misrepresented Hines. Naomi was not present, but she must have known about the matter, since the letter was addressed to her. In her stead was their daughter Nina, a filmmaker.

Nina Rosenblum knows something about charges of misrepresentation. A documentary she co-produced has become an infamous example of what happens when dubious facts are recruited for a noble cause. *Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II*, about black Army soldiers who endured racism from their countrymen and then supposedly went on to help liberate Dachau and Buchenwald, met with an enthusiastic response when it first aired on PBS, in 1992. It proposed historic solidarity between blacks and Jews in the crucible of the Holocaust, and was nominated for an Academy Award. But in a 1993 story for *The New Republic*, titled "The Exaggerators," Jeffrey Goldberg published interviews with black Army veterans who either said that their units, the ones mentioned in the film, had never entered the concentration camps or couldn't remember when they did. And the American Jewish Committee issued a report that cast doubt on the testimony of several veterans who appeared in the documentary.

Both father and daughter were hospitable when Mattis and Hochberg arrived at the house, but Walter Rosenblum was hardly forthcoming. "This is the last time I'm having this conversation with anyone about these pictures," he announced. He showed no interest in the scientific report that



Three Riveters (c. 1931)

the two visitors had brought. "He pushed it away," Mattis says. Instead Rosenblum spoke ardently about how he and his wife had devoted decades of their lives to reviving Lewis Hine's "fallen reputation." He repeated a story he has told many times, about Hine's befriending him when he was a young photographer and introducing him to potential employers as "a new and better Hine." "Can you imagine such kindness?" Rosenblum said.

Mattis mentioned a Hine photograph in the catalogue for an upcoming Sotheby's auction. Another *Three Riveters*, valued at \$20,000 to \$30,000, it came authenticated with a letter from Rosenblum stating, "This is to certify that the Lewis Hine photograph 'Three Riveters' is an original print made by Mr. Hine in my presence. I was his assistant when he printed this photograph for an exhibition of his work at the Riverside Museum in New York ... This print was later given to me as a gift by Mr. Hine."

When Mattis pressed him about the letter, Rosenblum quickly retreated. He had written it, he said, "as a favor" to the consignor of the picture, whom he would not name. He hadn't really "looked" at this particular picture, and certainly hadn't realized that the letter would be published in the auction catalogue. "That's part of life's stupidity," he said, admitting regret about the incident. When Hochberg suggested withdrawing the lot, Rosenblum said it was "too late." (On April 28, 1999, the picture sold for \$20,700 to an unseen bidder. There is good reason to believe that the

buyer was Rosenblum himself, but Sotheby's will neither confirm nor deny this.)

Rosenblum boasted that the 1977 exhibition of Hine's work at the Brooklyn Museum "broke attendance records" and toured the world. As a result prices shot up and "people began to wheel and deal in Hine pictures," he said. "For some reason I've become the center of this affair." He claimed that the 600 Hines left in his collection had come from various sources over the decades, including Hine and his son Corydon, who died in 1988.

But Rosenblum couldn't really explain how he had ended up with the bogus lifetime prints that Mattis and Hochberg had bought. He speculated that people might be forging his collection labels, stamping new prints with the Rosenblum name because "it makes them more valuable." Nor did he know why so many signed Hines were turning up, although he spoke repeatedly about people's printing them at the Photo League. "I can't tell a Hine signature," he said. "It's such an easy signature to copy." He added, "In this day and age, when photographs are worth a lot of money, all sorts of strange things happen." When Mattis pointed out that many galleries relied on Rosenblum's good name and considered opinion to verify Hine prints, he declared, "I think it's the purchaser's responsibility to ascertain, as you did, whether the picture is what it's supposed to be." When Mattis asked what would happen if dealers, too, found that prints had been misrepresented, Rosenblum declared coldly, "Let 'em call."

Mattis and Hochberg did not immediately receive the compensation they sought. Rosenblum wanted to barter his own photographs for the posthumous Hines, a trade that didn't interest them. In frustration, they hired a lawyer. After six months the prints were exchanged for three Strands in the Rosenblums' collection. Although the settlement specified no wrongdoing by the Rosenblums, they never refuted the allegation that the Hine prints were posthumous. "In six months they never once asked to see the scientific report," Mattis says. He and Hochberg obtained independent confirmation that the Strands were indeed authentic lifetime prints; they dated from roughly 1960, even though the Rosenblums had claimed that two of these, too, were vintage prints from the 1930s. "We were astonished and dismayed that in the eleventh hour of our negotiations they would continue to misrepresent prints by another of photography's masters," Mattis said.

The Rosenblums may have hoped that an out-of-court agreement would quietly put an end to the issue, but in fact their troubles had only begun. In October of 1999, soon after settling his lawsuit, Mattis turned over his lawyer's and Messier's reports to Houk, Greenberg, and Mann. Mattis also informed Robert Klein, the president of the Association of International Photography Art Dealers, which alerted its membership to beware of certain Hine photographs and not to speak to the press about the matter.

The behavior of the three dealers up to this point, however, is open to interpretation. Mattis praises their reaction to his news. "They told me—to a man—it was their intention to do right by their clients even if they received nothing from the Rosenblums," he says. He has no trouble understanding how the problem could have gone undetected for so long, especially since Greenberg and Mann were personally close to the Rosenblums. "Whenever Bob Mann or Howie Greenberg would have butterflies about all these exquisite Hines floating around," he says, "they would call up Walter and Naomi and get the pep talk of their lives. The dealers were betrayed by people they held in the highest esteem as authorities on photography in general and Lewis Hine in particular. If it were anyone but the Rosenblums, it would have taken ten weeks to expose this scam, not ten years."

The rate at which Rosenblum supplied the three dealers was, to say the least, unusual. By the late 1990s secondary dealers could call Houk, Greenberg, or Mann, request a signed *Powerhouse Mechanic* for a client, and have the order filled two or three weeks later. This is akin to how L. L. Bean runs its business; it is not the *modus operandi* for fine-art galleries specializing in vintage photographs. Seventy-year-old pictures, signed by a dead master and worth \$50,000, are exceptionally rare, as every dealer knows.

In fact, of the 6,000 Hine photographs in the collection of the George Eastman House, fewer than two hundred are signed, and most are smaller than Rosenblum's prints. The Eastman House doesn't own the negatives for some of the most popular Hine images seen in the past twenty years, including the variant of *Powerhouse Mechanic* that came from the Rosenblums. This image and *Steelworkers* were represented by posthumous prints in the 1977 Brooklyn Museum retrospective. If the curators of this exhibition presumably couldn't locate a first-rate vintage or lifetime print in 1977, why did so many turn up in the 1980s and 1990s? One likely possibility is that Rosenblum did not turn over all the Hine negatives to the Eastman House in 1955.

As the matter stands now, all parties have agreed to test any suspect prints; Rosenblum has reportedly pledged full reimbursement if they are proved posthumous. Gallery clients have been informed by letter about the potential problem. (This is a courtesy that Sotheby's and Christie's, regrettably, have not extended to many of their clients who bought Hines. Both auction houses have a policy against any repayment five years after a sale, even if the work is later found to be a fake.) Millions of dollars are at stake. The Rosenblums reportedly deposited \$1 million in an escrow account last year for possible disbursement. Many clients who were burned have accepted compensation in photographs rather than cash. Meanwhile, the FBI has opened a file on the case. If the Rosenblums took deductions for museum donations of vintage prints that were fakes, charges of tax fraud could be forthcoming.

BUILDING A BODY OF SCHOLARSHIP

Grant Romer and I sat one hot summer day in the tea-room at the George Eastman House. The head of the conservation department for the past twenty-two years at this august photographic institution, Romer ranks as a leading expert on photographic preservation and processes. With his small tortoiseshell glasses, his conversation often punctuated by a raised eyebrow or a faint smile, Romer has the catlike reserve of a middle-aged English don. When I complained about finding four different dates in auction catalogues and photography histories for *Powerhouse Mechanic*, he nodded. "We think we know quite a lot about photography," he said. "But when you start to press on some of the basic assumptions about the medium, it quickly starts to crumble like a cracker."

Digital fakery, in Romer's view, presents the next "scary issue" for collectors. Since the invention of photography, in the 1820s and 1830s, it has been possible to photograph a positive print in order to make a negative (from which to make more positive copies), but not without a telltale loss of definition. Digital technology may soon eliminate that problem. "From a good reproduction in a book you'll be able to make a near flawless negative," Romer predicts. "Right now, if I were a smart crook" (hint of a smile), "I'd be making Arbuses in my basement. Will the paper fluoresce? Yes, but it's likely that some of the prints she made herself would too. You won't have to be a master criminal to pull this off."

It will be a shame if the scandal eclipses Hine's accomplishments—if from now on the first question viewers ask when seeing his work is whether or not the print came from his hand. But this is precisely what has happened in the market, where Hine prints will be suspect for many years, although the conspiracy-minded are floating a theory that dealers have badmouthed Rosenblum's prints in order to buy them up at rock-bottom prices and then resell them in a few years at a huge profit. Some clients, even when informed that they own fakes, have decided to keep rather than exchange them. "I can imagine a sale down the road of Lewis Hine photographs printed by Walter Rosenblum, once collectors understand the full implications of their status," says Rick Wester, the former international director of photography at Christie's. "Why not?"

The voices of the art marketplace—upper-tier dealers, longtime collectors, department heads at auction houses—like to say that the Man Ray and Hine cases have benefited photography. Naiveté is no longer a valid excuse for a bad attribution, and the presence of fakes is a strong signal that these photographs are rising in value. Whether the conservators' new analytic weapons will keep pace with the medium's devilish reproducibility remains to be seen. It could be nerve-racking for those who have money at stake. "Photographs are much more complicated than we would like them to be," Romer says. "If these cases prove anything, it's that it's in everyone's interest now to get a whole lot smarter." ▀

Richard B. Woodward, an arts journalist and critic in New York, is a regular contributor to The New York Times.

MONSTRESS

A short story

BY LYSLEY TENORIO

Illustration by Tavis Coburn

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In 1966 the president of CocoLoco Studios broke the news to us in English: “As the Americanos say, it is time to listen to the music. Your movies are shit.” He unrolled a poster for *The Squid Children of Cebu*, our latest picture for CocoLoco. Our names were written in drippy, bloody letters. “A Checkers Rosario Film” was printed above the title, and my credit was at the bottom. “Reva Gogo,” it read, “as the Squid Mother.”

In its first week in release *Squid Children* played in just one theater in all of Manila; it was the midnight show at the La Luna. “A place for peasants and their whores,” the president said, tearing the poster in half, “and is it true they use a bed sheet for a screen?” Then, speaking in Tagalog, he fired us.

From CocoLoco we walked toward home, and when we passed The Oasis, one of the English-only movie theaters that had been sprouting up all over Manila, Checkers threw a stone at Doris Day’s face. *Send Me No Flowers* was playing, and above the box office Doris Day and Rock Hudson traded sexy glances and knowing smiles. “Their fault!” he said, and I understood what he meant. Imported Hollywood romance was what Manila moviegoers were paying to see, and Checkers’s low-budget horror could no longer compete. “All that overacting, that corny shit!” But here was the truth: those were the movies I longed for Checkers to make, where men fall in love with women and stay there, and tearful partings are only preludes to tearful reunions. *Real life*—that’s what I wanted to play, but my only roles were Bat-Winged Pygmy Queen, Werewolf Girl, Two-Headed Bride of Two-Headed Dracula, Squid Mother—all those monstrous girls that Checkers dreamed up just for me.

I took the second stone from his hand and put it in my purse. “Time to go home,” I said.

But we did not give up. Checkers shopped around his latest (and last) screenplay, *Dino-Ladies Get Quezon City*, to all the Manila studios and even one in Guam; every answer

was no. I auditioned and auditioned, and although casting agents liked my look (one called me a Filipina Sophia Loren), cold readings made me seem like an amateur. I shouted out dialogue that should have been whispered, and made tears of sorrow look like tears of joy.

For the next three years this was our life: I worked as a dentist’s secretary, and Checkers lamented. One night I woke to the sound of thwacking, and found him drunk on the balcony, cracking open coconuts with a machete. “Was I no good?” he asked, his grunts turning to sniffles. I rested my head against the back of his neck. “Your chance will come again,” I said. “Just come back to bed.”

Sometimes, when I play that night over in my head, I give it a new ending. I answer Checkers with the truth: that the most he ever achieved was minor local fame; that his movies were shoddily produced, illogically plotted, clumsily directed. This hurts Checkers—it hurts me, too—but the next morning we go on with our life. I marvel at the possibilities. We might have married, we might have had children. Maybe then we wouldn’t have needed Gaz Gazman the way we did that Saturday morning in January of 1970, when he rang our doorbell.

“Who are you?” I asked. Through the peephole I saw a stranger in a safari hat wipe his feet on our doormat as though we had already welcomed him.

“Name’s Gazman. From Hollywood, USA. I’m here for a Checkers”—he looked at the name written on his palm—“Rosario.”

I put my hand on the doorknob and made sure the door was locked. “What do you want?”

He leaned toward the peephole and grinned so widely that I saw fillings and crowns. “His monsters,” he said.

From the bedroom I heard Checkers starting his day the usual way, with a phlegmy cough from the previous night’s bourbon. I went to him. “Someone is here,” I said, poking his shoulder. “From Hollywood.”

He lifted his head.

"Get up," I said. "Be ready." I returned to the front door. I didn't want to, but I did. For Checkers. I unlocked the lock and let Gaz Gazman in.

I led him to the kitchen and offered him a plate of Ritz crackers and a square of margarine. I stood by the sink, watching him as he ate. His shirt and shorts were covered with palm trees, and his purple sandals clashed with the orange lenses of his sunglasses. A large canvas bag was on the floor beside him, and his hat was still on.

Checkers stepped into the kitchen. "The great Checkers Rosario," Gaz said.

Checkers stared at Gaz with bloodshot eyes. "Used to be," he said, and sat down.

Gaz explained himself: he was in Manila visiting an ex-girlfriend, a makeup artist for CocoLoco. He had toured the studio, gone through its vaults, and found copies of Checkers's movies. "I watched them all, and I thought, jackpot-eureka! This is the real deal. They said if I wanted to use them, I should find you." He pulled four canisters of film from his canvas bag and stacked them on the table. "And now you're found."

Checkers took the reels from the canisters. I could hear him whisper their titles like the names of women he had once loved and still did—*The Creature in the Cane*, *Cathedral of Dread*, *DraculaDracula*, *The House on Dead Filipino Road*. "Use them?" he said. "What for?"

"Three words," Gaz said. "Motion. Picture. History." He got up and circled the table as he explained his movie: en route back to Earth from a distant star system, the crew of *The Valedictorian* crash-lands on a hostile planet inhabited by bat-winged pygmies, lobster-clawed cannibals, two-headed vampires. "That's where your stuff comes in. I'm going to splice your movies with mine." He went on about the mixing up of genres, chop-suey cinema, bringing together East and West. "We'd be the ambassadors of international film!"

"What's your thinking on this?" Checkers asked me in Tagalog. "Is this man serious? Is he just an American fool?"

"Ask how much he'll pay," I said. "Get twenty percent more, give him the movies, and show him to the door."

"All our hard work for a few pesos?" Checkers said. "That's their worth to you?" He asked if I'd forgotten the ten-star reviews, the long lines on opening night, but I didn't want to hear about our life back then, so I started in on our life now—the hours he wasted while I worked hard, the constant mess of our apartment, his never-ending reminiscing about our CocoLoco days.

"I come in peace!" Gaz said. "Don't fight because of me."

I switched back to English. "We are discussing, not fighting. We don't have lawyers or agents to counsel us in these matters. The movie business here in Manila is corrupt and dishonest. It's not like in Hollywood."

"But I'm one of the good guys," Gaz said, and to prove

it, he made an offer: "Come to America. Just for a week. You can see a rough cut, visit the set, meet the cast. Plenty of room at my pad. I'll even take the couch. And if you don't like what you see, I'll reimburse you the airfare and you won't ever hear from me again."

Then Checkers said, "Reva will come too."

I shook my head. "This is your business." I spoke in English, so that Gaz would understand me. "The two of you. Not the three of us."

"But I need you," Checkers said. He came to me and put his hands on my shoulders. "You must be with me."

"Awww. You're just an old softie, aren't you, Chex?" Gaz winked at me. "How can you say no to that?"

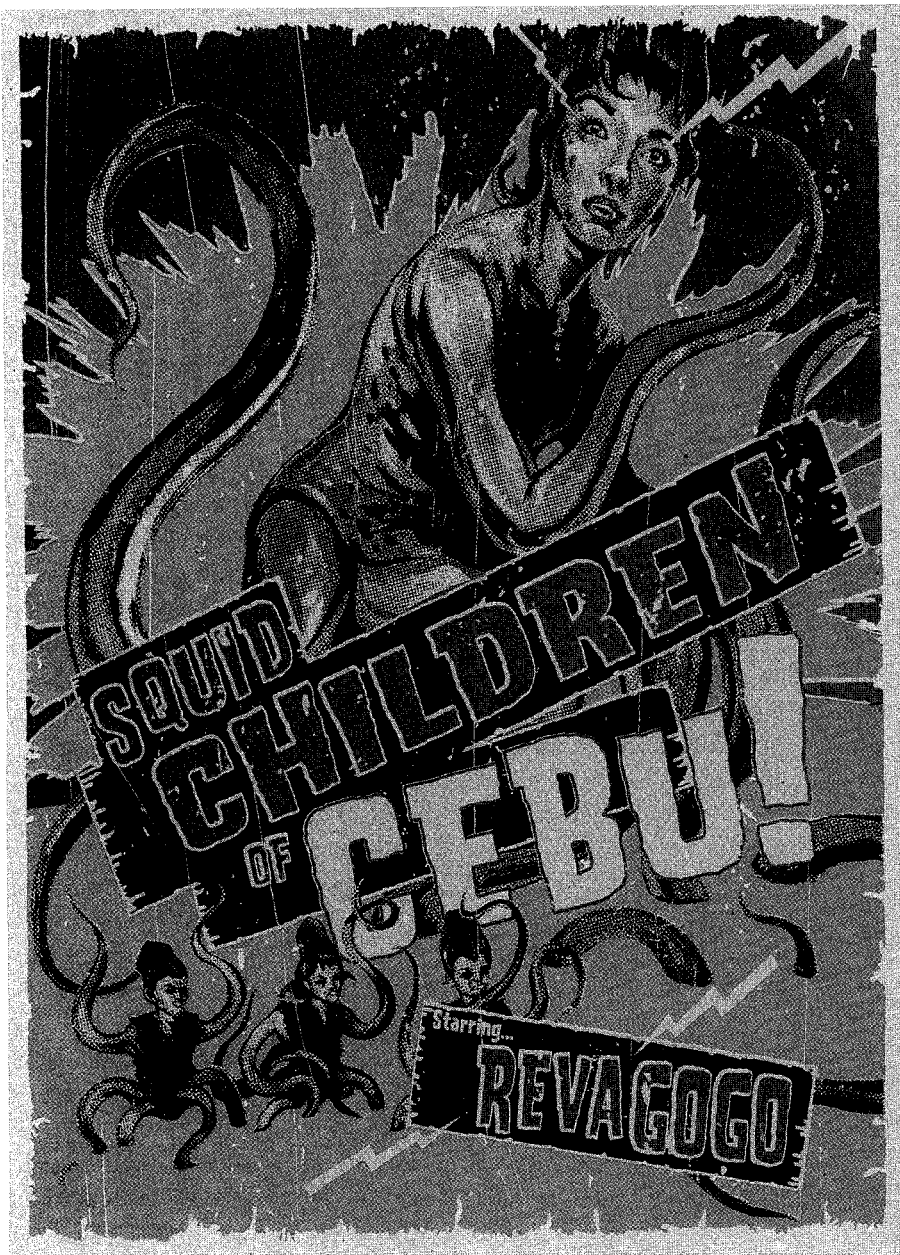
I put my hands on Checkers's face. He looked neater than he had in a long time, but he was still a mess. His shirt was misbuttoned at the top, patches of stubble showed what he'd missed when he shaved, and his Elvis-style pompadour was grayer than I'd realized.

"I can't," I said finally.

"Someone in America is dead." This was the lie I told my boss when I asked for a week off from work. "Someone close to me." It was easy to say—I told him over the phone—but part of me hoped he would deny my request. That way I would have to stay, and maybe Checkers would stay behind too. But my boss let me go, and he gave me fatherly advice: "Take all the time you need for final good-byes with dead loved ones." I promised I would.

We left very early Monday morning, and our flight to California felt like backward travel through time. In Manila it was dark, but outside the plane the sky was bright, packed with clouds so white they looked fake, like the clouds painted on the cinder-block walls of the La Luna. Checkers and I had begun our courtship there, thirteen years before. I was sixteen, he was twenty-two, and every Saturday night we held hands in the second row for the midnight double creature feature. Checkers would marvel at what he called "the beauty of the beast"; he confirmed the expert craftsmanship of a well-made monster with a quiet "Yes" (he gave a standing ovation for *Creature From the Black Lagoon*) and let out exasperated sighs for the lesser ones. The more menacing the monster, he said, the better. But I preferred a monster that could be tamed. I wanted to lie on the leathery palm of my gorilla suitor like Fay Wray, soothe his rage with my calming, loving gaze. "You'll be on the screen one day," Checkers said. "I'll put you there. Just have faith in me."

So I did. After high school I moved in with Checkers. I took odd jobs sewing and cleaning while he worked on his treatment for *The Creature in the Cane*. The night CocoLoco Studios bought it, I was rewarded for my faith. Checkers gave me a white box tied with pink ribbon and a note attached that read *Wear this for me*. I expected a nightgown with a broken strap and a tattered neckline—standard attire for a woman



in peril—but when I opened it, I found a pair of wolf ears, a rubber forehead covered with boils, and several plastic eye-balls. “You will be the Creature,” he said, near tears and smiling. “You.”

The night we started filming, as I rubber-cemented eye-balls to my face, I told myself this was a first step, that even great actresses have unglamorous starts. I told myself the same thing the night of the premiere, as the audience cheered wildly when a dozen sugarcane farmers descended on the Creature with sticks and buckets of holy water. *This is only the beginning*, I told myself, and I repeated it, like a prayer, through all the films I did for Checkers.

The plane shook hard when we landed in America, and Checkers woke in a panic, hitting his head on my chin. “We’re here?” he said, breathing heavily. “We finally arrived?” I rubbed the back of his neck to calm him. But my lip was bleeding. I could taste it.

Gaz didn’t live in Hollywood. He lived south of it, in Torrance, in a gray building called The Paradise. “This is it,” he said, unlocking the door. “The home of Gaz Gazman and DoubleG Productions.” It was a tiny apartment, the living room furnished with a sinking couch and a pair of yellow beanbags, and the offices of DoubleG Productions were nothing more than a walk-in closet: a metal desk was crammed inside, a telephone and a student film trophy—second place—on top of it. A junior-college diploma hung above the fake fireplace, and I learned that Gaz Gazman was not his real name. “Who the hay wants to see a movie by Gazwick Goosmahn? But *Gaz Gazman*”—he snapped twice—“that’s a director’s name.”

“It’s the same with me!” Checkers said. “My real name? Chekiquinto. Can you believe?” He shook his head and laughed. “*Chekiquinto*. My gosh!”

“Horrible!” Gaz laughed along. “And you? Is Reva Gogo for real?” He said it as if he already knew that it wasn’t. My real name was Revanena Magogolang. I never liked it, so right before *The Creature in the Cane*, I de-clunked it down to its smoothest sound. “And Reva Gogo,” my credit read, “as the Creature.”

I took Checkers’s hand and made him sit with me on a beanbag. “Show us your movie,” I said. The sooner we saw Gaz’s clips, I thought, the sooner we could get our money and hurry home.

Gaz wheeled in a film projector from his bedroom, loaded a 16mm reel, and hung a white bed sheet on the wall. “There are rough spots,” he said, “but I think you’ll like what you see.” He drew the curtains, turned off the lights, filled a bowl with pretzels, and showed us what he had.

The film opened with a view of Earth from outer space, and a voice (Gaz’s) began to narrate: “The year is 1999. The world and all its good citizens have never been better. World peace has been achieved, no child goes hungry, disease has been gotten rid of. Man is free to contemplate the human condition, and more importantly, colonize outer space.” Entering the picture was a bottle-shaped spaceship, THE VALEDICTORIAN glittering in blue letters

along its hull. "There she is," Gaz whispered to us, "the smartest ship in the fleet." A whistle blew, and then a weird, psychedelic montage of oddly angled stills began: we met Captain Vance Banner, the square-jawed, fearless leader; Ace Trevor, the hotheaded helmsman; the Intelli-Bot 4-26-35 ("My birthday," Gaz said); and finally Lorena Valdez, the raven-haired, olive-skinned meteor scientist. "Eyes darker than the cosmic void, lips redder than human blood," Gaz quoted from his script. "Beauty and brains. Lorena's got 'em in spades."

Gaz showed the rest of what he had: quick scenes of the actors running in a nearby canyon, which would be the planet inhabited by Checkers's monsters. "That's where I'll splice your footage in," he said. The canyon scenes were composed of reaction shots, extreme close-ups of the actors shouting "Look out!" "Duck, Captain, duck!" and "They're hideous!" "I had them take expressions lessons in West Hollywood," Gaz said. "They've definitely done their homework."

I looked at Checkers. Pretzel crumbs speckled the corner of his mouth, but when I tried to wipe them off, he brushed my hand away. "Sssshh," he said. His face glowed blue from the movie on the wall, just as it used to back in the Coco-

Loco editing room, late at night after a long day's shoot. I would end up asleep on the floor, sometimes until morning, waiting for him.

Gaz turned off the projector. "And that's just the beginning," he said, smiling. "So, are we in?"

Even before Gaz turned on the lights, Checkers was on his feet, searching his pockets for a pen. "Let's do it," he said. His breathing was quick and heavy, almost desperate, and his forehead dripped sweat. "I'm ready," he said. "We're in."

It was still early evening, and Gaz suggested we drive to the set. "MGM?" Checkers guessed. "Twentieth Century Fox?"

"My mom's basement in Pasadena," Gaz answered.

Freeway traffic was slow; it was near dark by the time we pulled up in front of Gaz's mother's house, an old, peeling Victorian with a shingled roof that had almost no shingles left. The shutters dangled from the uppermost windows, like limbs attached to a body by one last tendon. That house would have been Checkers's dream set. But on our CocoLoco budget we had to make do with tin-roofed shacks and three-walled huts in shantytowns far beyond Manila, where we paid impoverished locals with cigarettes and sacks of rice to play our victims for a day. "If we'd had something like this to work with," Checkers said, "life back home would still be good."

The basement was like an underground studio set, sectioned off by plywood partitions and cardboard walls. Each room was a different part of *The Valedictorian*—the bridge, the space lab, the weapons bay, the space sauna. We hadn't been on a set since *Squid Children*, four years before, but Checkers made himself at home, examining each room from different angles as if he were behind a camera, filming right then.

I wandered off alone. "Explore all you want, but don't touch anything," Gaz said. I didn't need to touch anything to know its cheapness. The helm was made of Styrofoam and cardboard, painted to look like steel; the main computer was a reconfigured pinball machine; the Intelli-Bot 4-26-35 was an upside-down fishbowl painted gold atop a small TV set, and its bottom half was a vacuum cleaner on wheels. But I was used to this lack of marvelousness, because Checkers worked this way too, attempting magic from junk. Wet toilet tissue shaped into fangs was good enough for a wolf man or a vampire, and our ghosts were just bed sheets. For the *Squid Children*, Checkers found a box of firemen's rubber boots, glued homemade tentacles (suction cups affixed to segments of rubber hose) on them, and made his tiny nephews and nieces wear them on their heads. "On film," Checkers used to say, "everything looks real."

I found Checkers and Gaz in the space lab, the contract between them. Gaz would pay \$2,500 up front and then five percent of the profits. "Jackpot-eureka!" Checkers said after he signed, though neither of us knew how much that would be worth back home.

ARIA

After the funeral, a bird—
frantic or ecstatic or gone mad
in the rhododendron thickets—
hammered open my night,
full of verve,
sure of his pitch,
the sweltering room
levitated in miracle
and good news,

then swift and deafening,
a spring downpour
silenced him.

—TERESA CADER

Teresa Cader's most recent collection of poems is The Paper Wasp (1999). Her previous book, Guests (1991), received the Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America.

Gaz and Checkers wanted to celebrate, so we went from bar to bar on Hollywood Boulevard and then walked up and down the Walk of Fame. "A trio of visionaries should have the stars at their feet, right Chex?" Gaz said. Checkers nodded, zigzagging down the street. For a long time Checkers had resented Hollywood, convinced that American movies had driven us out of the business. Now here he was, lolling about in enemy territory, drunk on beer, bourbon, and all the inspiration surrounding him—the Hollywood Wax Museum, Grauman's Chinese Theatre, even the life-size celebrity cutouts in storefront windows. I tried to keep up, to make sure he didn't fall.

Hours later Checkers and I made love on Gaz's couch. At first I told him we shouldn't, not there in a stranger's home. "He's so drunk he'll never wake up," Checkers said. He nibbled my neck and nuzzled my breasts, letting out a low growl. "Gently," I said, running my fingers through his pompadour. "Softly." He obeyed. I knew Checkers was drunk, but this was how I wanted us to finish the day, the longest of our lives. Thirty-two hours had passed since we left Manila, and I had stayed awake through all the nonstop coming and going. So I gave myself up to this moment when we could finally slow down, and I imagined us as Deborah Kerr and Burt Lancaster in *From Here to Eternity*.

The next morning I reached for Checkers and he wasn't there. I opened my eyes and found him on the floor, asleep on his stomach. For a moment I thought we were still in Manila, that this was just another of our ordinary days. But then I saw the yellow beanbags on the floor, brighter than anything in our apartment back home.

I got dressed and went into the kitchen. Gaz was already there, sunglasses on, wearing a tiger-print robe. "Now, that," he said, standing by the window, "is a Hollywood morning." I looked out. It was hazy and bright at the same time.

Suddenly I realized that Gaz was staring at me. "What?" I said.

"It's weird to see you this way. In the human flesh, I mean." He removed his sunglasses. "I remember you in Checkers's movies, all fancy with your tentacles and boils and lobster claws. Chex got lucky when he found you. You make a good monster. You're a mistress of monsters." He chuckled. "You're a monstress."

"I am not monstrous," I said.

"Monstress," he said. "Not monstrous. See for yourself." He looked behind and above me. I turned around, and then I saw it, tacked to the wall: a poster for *The Squid Children of Cebu*. "I swiped it from CocoLoco and hung it up this morning. Thought it might make you two feel at home."

The edges had yellowed, but the picture was still clear: a dozen Squid Children on the edge of a lagoon, and behind them, lying on the shore, the Squid Mother, her belly bloated with squid eggs yet to be spawned, tentacles flailing all around her. That costume was a fat suit with segments of

rubber hose affixed to it, and near the end of the day it had felt like my own skin. For hours I had rolled along the dirty sand, moaning "*Grraargh, grraargh*," and I remember thinking, *This is it, this is my life*, as Checkers filmed me from afar. I hadn't seen the poster since the president of CocoLoco showed it to us, as an example of our failure.

At noon we returned to the set to meet the cast. It was trash-collection day in Pasadena; garbage cans lined the street, and next to Gaz's house the parts of a dismantled mannequin lay in a pile on the sidewalk. "We can use this," Gaz said. "Help me out, Chex."

I walked ahead of them, toward the back of the house. The basement door was open. "Hello?" I called out. I stepped inside and heard giggling coming from the bridge. When I turned the corner, I found Captain Banner and Ace Trevor leaning against the helm, their arms around each other. They might have been kissing. "Sorry," I said, my face warm from embarrassment.

They let go of each other and stood up straight. "We were just going over lines." The man who played Captain Banner held out his hand. "I'm Everett Noel Dubois," he said. "But friends call me E. Noel. This is Prescott St. John, a.k.a. Ace Trevor." Prescott smiled, straightening his collar. They were the first professional actors I'd met in years, and I worried that they would ask about my own acting history; a list of my roles and the movies I had starred in formed in my head, and it made me feel meager, shameful. I wanted to avoid the subject altogether, to focus only on the good parts of my life. "I work for a dentist in Manila" was all I could think to say.

Gaz and Checkers walked in, carrying legs, hands, arms, a torso. They set the mannequin parts on the floor, and Gaz made formal introductions. "Where's our Lorena?" he asked, looking at his watch. "One thing I demand from my actors," he said, "is attendance. Be back in a flash." He went upstairs to call her at home. E. Noel and Prescott went outside to go over lines.

Checkers knelt to the floor and started rebuilding the mannequin. He said he was genuinely impressed by what he'd seen so far, but then he whispered his disappointments in Tagalog. "His camera work is unsteady," he said, "and his composition is so-so. But I have some suggestions. Lucky for him I have the experience, right?" He looked up at me. "What? Why is your face like that?"

"Like what?"

"Like this." He scrunched up his face into a girlish pout and rolled his eyes. "What's wrong with you?"

I knelt beside him and tried attaching a hand to a wrist. "Maybe we should go home today. Just take the twenty-five hundred before he changes his mind."

"Is your head broken? We have almost a week left. The American will need my guidance. This is a Gazman-Rosario Production, don't you know?"

I slammed the mannequin hand against the floor; the pinky finger broke off. "Gazman-Rosario Production? Gazman-Idiot Production! You've already done the work he needs. You finished it years ago!" I took a deep breath, trying to make my voice gentle again. "You were finished years ago. Don't start this nonsense again. If you do ..." I should have stopped there, but the poster in Gaz's kitchen hung in my head like a fateful welcome-home banner, and I couldn't go back. "If you do, I won't forgive you this time."

Checkers set the mannequin's right arm gently on the floor. Then he got to his feet and took backward steps toward the wall, the way my victims would in his movies, right before the kill. "Checkers." I held my arms out to comfort him, but he wouldn't come to me. "Checkers?"

Suddenly Gaz came running down the stairs, cursing and shouting. "Crap!" he said. He kicked a computer console, and it flew across the basement. "I lost my Lorena Valdez! She decided she'd rather do some bimbo role for a guy named Roman What's-His-Face than finish my movie." He leaned against the wall, slid down to the floor, put his face on his knees. "Where am I going to find another actress who'll work for free? Crap!"

Then Checkers started pacing too. "Crap-crap!" he shouted. He went on about the money he would lose, and he wondered how someone who once was great could slip

away into a life as dead-end as ours. "I'm sorry," I said, reaching for him. But he just pushed my arm away and told me to leave him alone. So I went to Gaz instead. "It's okay," I said. "Don't worry."

He took a few deep breaths and nodded. Then his head rose slowly and he stared into my eyes, almost lovingly. I thought he might try to kiss me. I backed away.

"What size space suit do you wear?" he whispered.

It was freakishly hot the day I became Lorena Valdez. We were filming at the bottom of a canyon near Torrance, and all morning long E. Noel, Prescott, and I ran back and forth, pretending to flee from Checkers's monsters, while Gaz followed us with a hand-held camera. Checkers was alone at the top of the canyon, next to the NO TRESPASSING sign, looking out for cops.

At noon we filmed a crucial scene that required me to run up the side of the canyon. "Now you're fleeing from the stinkiest, ooggiest bat-winged pygmy you've ever seen," Gaz said, "and it wants you for breakfast." He put his hands on my shoulders and leaned in close. "Think about that as you're running away. Understand?"

I had never taken direction from another man before. "I do," I said.

Gaz called, "Action!" I ran. I visualized myself from years

TAR PIT

If you've ever seen one bubble up, you don't forget.
Reeking pitch, glossy sludge in heaving gouts,
Steeping muck that devours and preserves.

If in the presence of all that brooding pressure,
You were instructed to imagine the untold volumes,
You can't stop now, you still can't help but shiver.

Patient chemical ferment, opulent and desolate.
If your eyes played over it, you saw stained glass.
If you clutched the cyclone fence, your feet would squinch.

And didn't it give off a stench like everyone's garage?
And weren't you the one who dreamed your own back yard
Began to ooze sweet crude from a hidden seam?

Once you have learned it could suck a mammoth down,
Why not a home? Why not a whole sheltered childhood
Sealed away from all that flenses and bleaches?

Animal and mineral, mother of all mires.
Why turn away now? Why, you were born near there,
No more than a dire wolf's howl away. You know full well

There's not a fen can touch it when it comes
To what's forbidden, nor a bog on God's green earth
So firm with bone, and all that's bred therein.

What is there to fear? There is so much there,
If it came in drums it would last you a lifetime.
Dream on, go ahead, stick that broad brush right in:

You can make your own rank slick that simmers and stews,
You can slather it on in rich heaping glops
So that nothing escapes, not a grief, not one hurt.

If you loved how it fumed and seethed, how can you deny
It smacks of every livid urge that's in your blood?
If all the world were a glade, what would you have to forgive?

—DAVID BARBER

David Barber is a staff editor of The Atlantic and the author of The Spirit Level (1995), a collection of poems.

before, chasing after me now, fangs bared and claws ready to shred, tentacles wrapping around me, squeezing me to my final breath. I could hear a hiss in my ear, and it made me shiver, even in the heat. I ran faster. I hadn't wanted to be Lorena Valdez, not at first (I agreed to play the part only in order to guarantee Checkers his money), but now I knew I had to save her from the monsters who wanted to drag her back down into the pit of this hostile planet. I scrambled up the side of the canyon on my hands and knees, telling myself, *Climb. Get to safety.* But when I looked up, I saw Checkers walking toward me, as though he wanted to sabotage the shot. "Go!" I said. "You're ruining the picture!" He stepped away.

I finally reached the top. I got to my feet, looked straight down into the camera, and screamed my very first line of dialogue ever: "They're hideous!" Then Gaz yelled, "Cut," clapped twice, and proclaimed Lorena Valdez a new heroine for our time.

The day before I was meant to leave America, we shot the love scene. "Hold her here," Gaz directed. He placed E. Noel's hands on my waist and put my arms around E. Noel's neck. He stepped back to check the shot.

It wasn't cold in Gaz's mother's basement, but I was shivering. "You seem nervous," E. Noel whispered. "First on-screen kiss?"

I had gouged, bitten, clawed, and stabbed. Never kissed. "No."

He smiled as if he didn't believe me. "Well, if you do get nervous, just pretend I'm Checkers. That'll make it easier."

Gaz called action. We started the scene.

We spoke of our failed mission and our fallen comrades—Ace had been barbecued by the bat-winged pygmies, and the Intelli-Bot 4-26-35 had malfunctioned beyond repair and turned against us—and we spoke of time wasted harnessing comet-tail energy, studying asteroid samples, mining moons for precious metals.

"All that matters to me now," E. Noel said, "is you."

"Captain. I—I'm frightened."

"Of what? That demonic intergalactic menagerie of fanged creatures can't touch us. Not now. Not with only five minutes of oxygen left."

"No. That's not it. I'm afraid of"—I took a deep breath—"of loving you. Meteor analysis, moon colonization, those things are easy. But not love. Love takes work. Love takes time, and we're running out of it. We're in a dead-end situation, and I can't love you without getting hurt." I broke free from E. Noel's embrace and walked toward the observation window, in near disbelief that these lines, the most beautiful I had ever spoken, were actually mine.

E. Noel put his hands on my shoulders. "Lorena. Of all the star systems I have explored, of all the planets upon which I've walked, there is nowhere in the galaxy I'd rather be than here, on the bridge of *The Valedictorian*, looking into your eyes. If this is my end, then it's more than I

could have ever hoped for." He pulled me close against him.

"I don't know what—"

He put his index finger over my mouth. "Ssshh. Just kiss me, Lorena. That's an order."

The slick of saliva and flesh of his lips, the running of his fingers through my wig, our chests and hearts coming together—all of it was thrilling, knowing the camera was there to capture the moment.

Then someone started laughing.

"Cut!" Gaz shouted. "What the dang is so funny?"

It was Checkers. "Pardon," he said. "Sorry." But he started laughing again.

I let go of E. Noel. I walked off the bridge, toward Checkers. "What's wrong with you?"

"With me?" Checkers said in Tagalog. "Do you know what you look like up there? All that corny talk. All that overacting the American is making you do." He laughed some more.

"That's enough," I said. But he kept going, and his laughter turned to cruelty. He said the scene between Lorena and Banner was utterly unbelievable, that no two people would say such meaningless things in what could be the last moments of their lives. "They would try to stay alive. They would fight. That's what brave explorers of outer space do, right?" He belittled Gaz's script, insulted my acting, poked fun at the fact that I was kissing an obvious homosexual. "On film," he said, "you will look like a whore."

Sometimes I wonder if he meant this as a warning, a last chance to save me from starring in yet another fool's movie. I didn't think so at the time. My hand went up and lashed forward, a gesture I'd made dozens of times before, in Checkers's movies. But this time contact was made, real pain inflicted. Below his eye were four red lines, and beneath my nails were his blood and flakes of his skin. "Get away from here," I said.

Checkers touched his face. He looked at the blood on his fingers.

"Get off the set," I said in English, so that everyone around could understand me, "and let me act." Checkers moved away, still stunned, and then left the basement.

Gaz called places. "From the top," he said. We began again, but E. Noel kept stumbling over "demonic intergalactic menagerie," and technical difficulties ruined the fifth, sixth, and seventh takes. Only on the eleventh did we finally get it right. I took E. Noel's advice and pretended he was Checkers. When we kissed, I managed to shed a single, perfect tear, just as Gaz had written in the script.

"Slight problemo," Gaz said the next day. "We're not done." Checkers and I were packing for our flight back home. We hadn't spoken since I struck him, and he had not returned to Gaz's apartment until early that morning. To this day I don't know where he was that night, or how he found his way back.

Gaz explained the situation. "You're in the shot, Chex. When Lorena's running up the canyon, you're standing right there like this." He got up, put his hands in his pockets, looked all around, like a lost tourist. "I could try to write you into the script, but at this point ..." Gaz sat down and started folding one of Checkers's shirts. "I need you to stay." He was speaking only to me. "A day or two, maybe three. I'd like to reshoot some other scenes. I'll even pay for your new ticket back. What do you say?"

Hours later we pulled up to the curb at the airport. "Happy trails," Gaz said, patting Checkers on the back, "till we meet again."

Checkers stared at Gaz for a few seconds, the way he had the morning they met, and then got out of the car. "Five percent," he said. "Don't forget."

I walked with Checkers to the terminal entrance. "You'll be okay, right?" I asked. "It's just a few days." I fixed his collar and smoothed his hair. I leaned in to kiss him good-bye, but stopped at the sight of the scratch marks on his face. They had scabbed over, and I traced them with my finger. "Fool," I said, shaking my head, weeping. "Look what you made me do." He grabbed hold of my wrist, slid my hand down to his lips, but instead of kissing it he simply breathed in through his nose and mouth, as if I were air to him, his only oxygen. Then he let me go and went inside.

Gaz handed me a tissue when I got back in the car. "What's a few days?" he said. What he couldn't understand was that Checkers and I had never left each other before, and on the way to the airport I'd daydreamed for us a lovelier farewell scene: Just before takeoff Checkers exits the plane and dashes across the tarmac to get to me. We kiss so long and hard, hold each other so tight, that we can never be apart.

Gaz finally titled the movie *The Terror of the Fanged Creatures*, and the morning after we finished shooting he showed me the screenplay for his next movie, *Pasadena RollerWars*. "I'm still looking for my BB San Juan," he said. "The tough and sexy heroine of the deadliest rink in town. Think it over." I called Checkers and told him all the things Gaz had told me: that once-in-a-lifetime opportunities really are once-in-a-lifetime, that another American role would be good for my career, that we could always use the money. "I'm doing this for us, right?" I said.

Checkers was silent for a moment. I thought we'd been disconnected. "CocoLoco wants me back," he finally said. "They read *Dino-Ladies Get Quezon City*, and they want me to direct it. They said if my old movies can conquer Hollywood, then my new ones can double-conquer Manila. It's unlucky for you that you're not around to star in it."

I had burned the only copy of *Dino-Ladies* years before, but I let Checkers talk his talk, because it was better than

the truth—I could see him sitting on the couch, in his boxer shorts and dirty undershirt, waiting amid his mess for my return. "Your chance came again," I said. "Congratulations." Then I hung up, found Gaz sitting in his kitchen, staring at the Hollywood morning, and told him he had his BB San Juan.

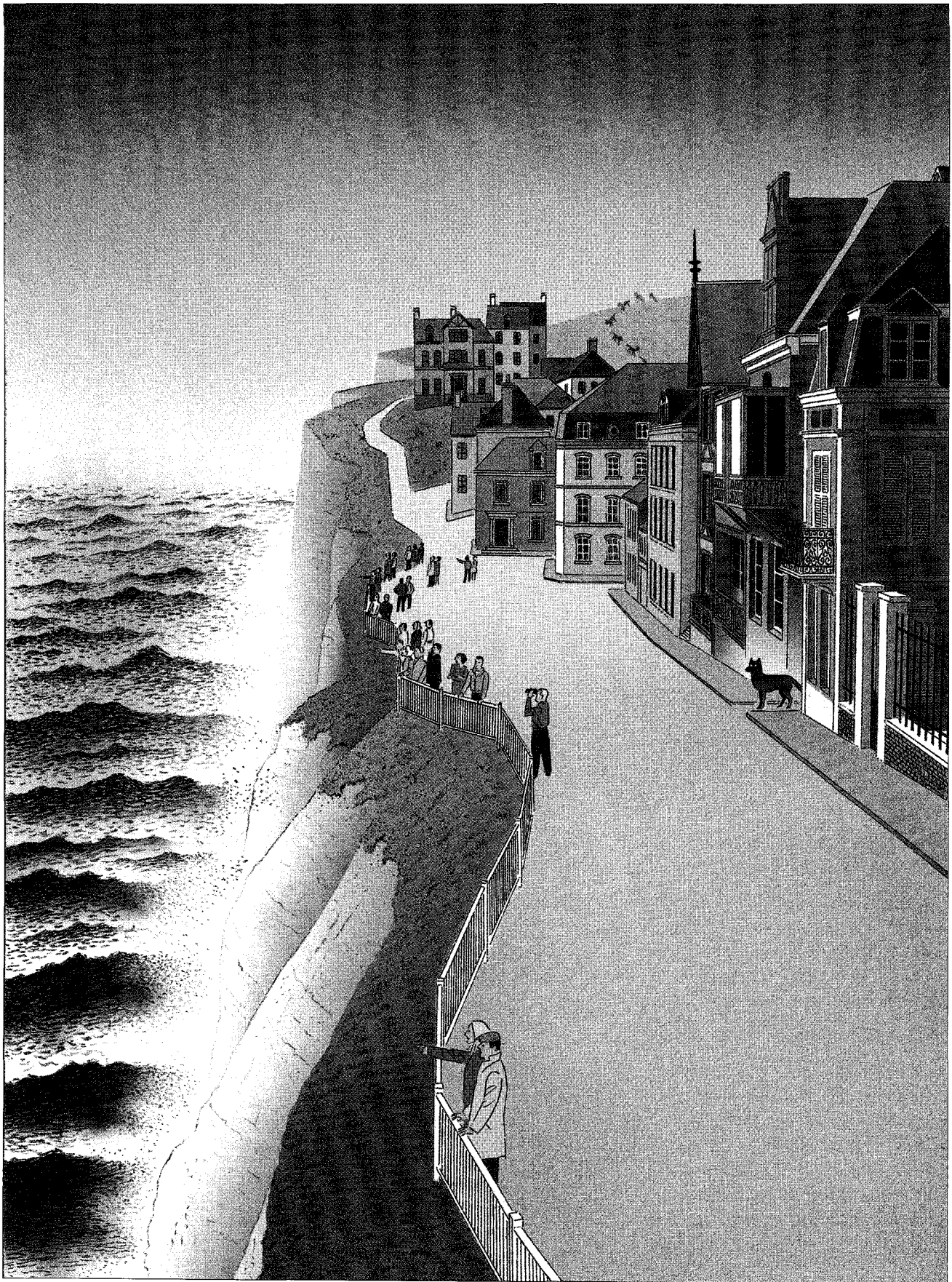
After *RollerWars* I did two more films for Gaz: *The Twisted History-Mystery* and *Jesse: Girl of a Thousand Streets*. All together they took almost three years to shoot. Checkers and I spoke less, rarely returning each other's calls, and I learned not to miss him by reminding myself that I was a working professional actress in America; back home I didn't know what I was. I never returned to find out.

But of all the films I did for Gaz, only *Fanged Creatures* is remembered. I saw it again just last year, at the Silver Scream Theater, in L.A., almost twenty years after its original release. I sat alone in the second row; behind me was an audience full of college students who mocked it and hooted throughout, and laughed especially hard during my kiss with E. Noel. But that scene still moved me, and I was teary—what did those young people know about the ending of the world all around you? A kiss is all that matters in your final moments. I knew this firsthand.

Overall, *Fanged Creatures* was still impressive. The plot was fast-paced and the camera work steady, and our reaction shots conveyed all the fear and dread Gaz had hoped for. But the back-and-forth between his film and Checkers's footage was rougher than I remembered. Bright Technicolor pictures alternated with yellowish, grainy ones, and Checkers's monsters moved in a dreamy slow motion: the Squid Mother's tentacles flowed around her like the tails of kites; the Bat-Winged Pygmy Queen glided through the air like a leaf in the wind; Werewolf Girl looked almost lovely as she bayed at the moon. I had not seen myself this way for so long that I was secretly mournful at the end, when, after Captain Banner manages to restore power to the engines, Lorena presses the button that drops the nucleotomic bombs on Planet X. "There you are," Gaz whispered to me the night of the premiere, "obliterating your selves out of existence."

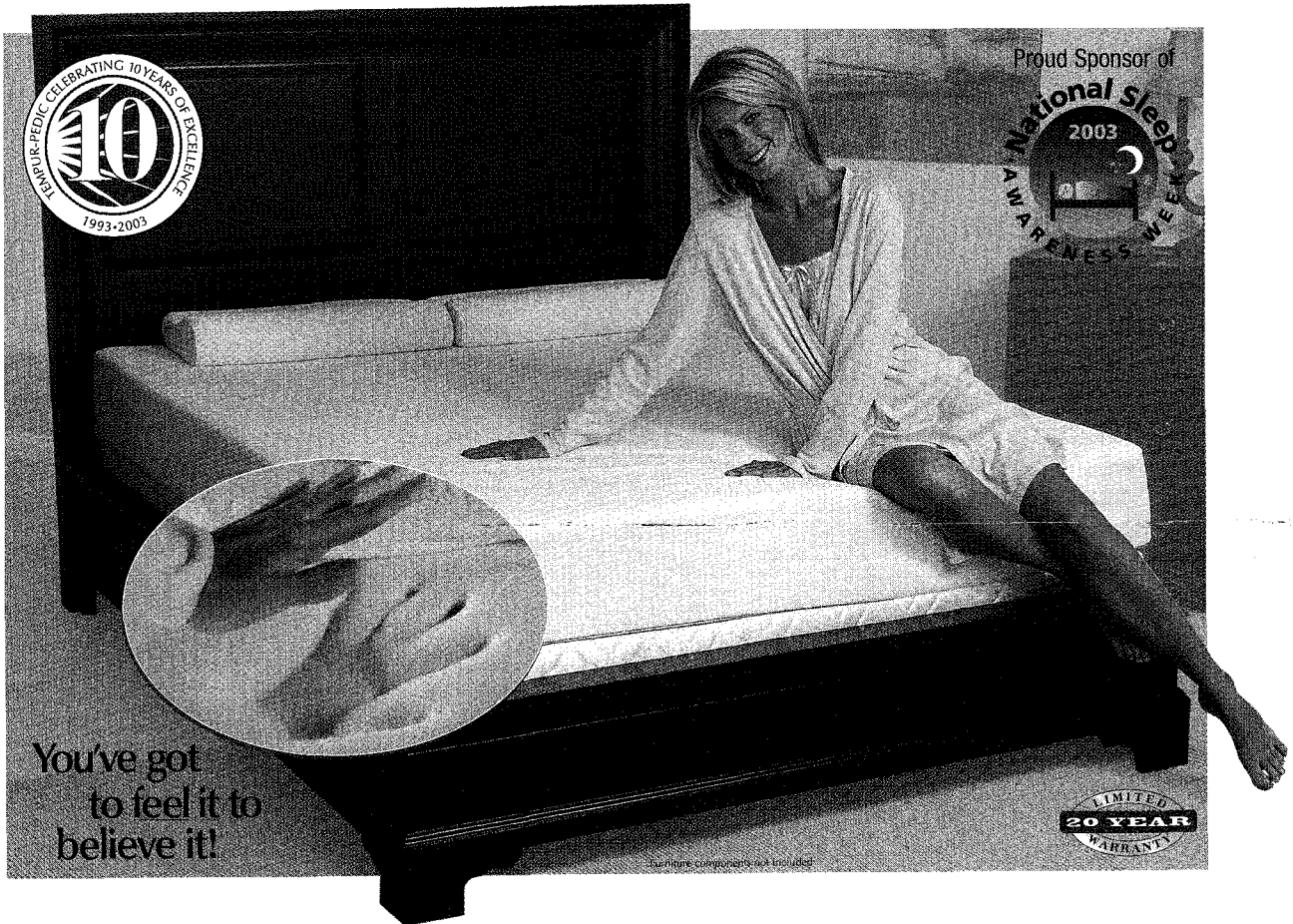
But what stayed with me then, what loops in my head even now, is what I didn't see in the movie: that scene in the canyon, the one Gaz said Checkers had ruined. I saw it only once, right before Gaz edited it out. On hands and knees I struggle uphill, a filthy, sweaty mess; my wig is a nest of pebbles and leaves; dirt smears my face, neck, and space suit. But none of that matters to Checkers. He comes to me with open arms, as if I am a thing of unequalled beauty. *On film everything looks real.* It was true. Checkers did look as if he meant to help me up, to pull me to safety, to rescue me from that most hostile of planets. ▀

Lysley Tenorio is a former Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University. He will be a visiting professor in English at Saint Mary's College of California next year. His story "Superassassin" appeared in the October 2000 Atlantic.



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BOOKS & CRITICS

THIS MONTH:

The Reluctant Fan

David Kipen takes a lyrical look at the national pastime while reviewing Andrew Zimbalist's pragmatic *May the Best Team Win: Baseball Economics and Public Policy*.
PAGE 92

Aural History

Christopher Hitchens finds Bob Woodward's latest book, *Bush at War*, both out of date and misleading.
PAGE 95

Book Group in Chadors

Mona Simpson discovers an intriguing blend of cultures in Azar Nafisi's memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.
PAGE 103

Still Growing

Michael Byers's short-story collection *The Coast of Good Intentions* was "precociously accomplished," Thomas Mallon writes. But the author's first novel, *Long for This World*, suffers from "a lack of follow-through and shapeliness."
PAGE 105

Lost in Translation

Burton Raffel's new English version of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* leaves Philip Hensher wondering why no English translation has ever gotten Stendhal right.
PAGE 107

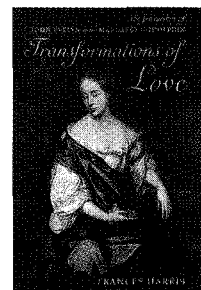
NEW & NOTEWORTHY

What to read this month

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

.....

John Evelyn—the great English diarist, gardener, scholar, and sometime public servant—was a fifty-year-old husband and father when, in 1671, he began a strange and intense friendship with a maid of honor at Charles II's dissolute court: the beautiful, witty, and ardently devout Margaret Blagge, age nineteen. For six years, until her early and harrowing death following the birth of her child (she had married a rising young courtier in 1675), they carried on a platonic and passionate relationship, imbued with their deeply felt religious convictions. They prayed together; they exchanged letters in which they expatiated on their spiritual partnership and seemed (especially to the modern reader) to conflate religious and sexual fervor (these soul mates knew that their friendship was open to misreading—Blagge asked Evelyn to burn six of her letters just before her marriage); she sat for a portrait for him (which is at once provocative and demure); he gave her a locket set with diamonds. She believed that religious devotion and self-knowledge were inconsistent with the claims imposed on women and with what Harris nicely terms "the sense of being constantly observed and regulated," either at court or in marriage, and so she was drawn to a life of celibacy. He, worldly-wise, knew how terribly limited were the options available to a pious young woman in Protestant England, which had no nunneries, so he urged the love of his life to marry. In short, theirs was a complicated relationship—and one that today's readers and academics would condescendingly and almost automatically describe in crude terms of sex and power. Indeed, in the 1950s an Oxford scholar wrote two debunking studies of Evelyn and Blagge in which he dismissed her religiosity as neurotic and argued that it would have been cured by sex. But Harris, a senior curator of manuscripts at the British Library, is far too careful a historian to indulge in anachronistic cynicism. In her subtle analysis she places Evelyn and Blagge's relationship in the context of the post-Reformation ideal of "seraphic love" and in the tradition of intense friendships between men and women in religious settings—friendships that to this pair seemed, Harris writes convincingly, "to offer an escape from the constraints of patriarchy." Dissecting an intense, ambiguous, and fraught relationship (one in which what we



TRANSFORMATIONS
OF LOVE

by Frances Harris
Oxford

"Ah! How
sweet coffee
tastes! Lovelier
than a thousand
kisses, sweeter
far than
muscatel
wine!"

From J.S. Bach's
"Coffee Cantata,"
1732



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now see as sublimated sexuality played a prominent role, but one that existed in a pre-psychoanalytic age), Harris gently compels her readers to understand that relationship through the participants' eyes. She throws light not only on the inner lives of her subjects but also on the religion, court culture, philosophy, concepts of femininity, sexual mores, and—not least—horticulture of seventeenth-century England. With a delicate but sure hand Harris has accomplished the highest and most difficult task of the historian: she has allowed us to understand the past on its own terms. Her piercing, quietly stylish work is without question one of the best histories of the year.

HISTORY

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: REDEEMER PRESIDENT, by Allen C. Guelzo (Eerdmans). "There have been ten thousand attempts at the life of Abraham Lincoln," Horace Greeley remarked, "whereof that of Wilkes Booth was perhaps the most atrocious; yet it stands by no means alone." For more than 130 years what is sometimes called the "Lincoln industry" has churned out title after title about our sixteenth President. Since 1934, when the Lincoln scholar James G. Randall addressed the American Historical Association on the question "Has the Lincoln Theme Been Exhausted?," thousands of books have been written. Most volumes in this crowded field aren't worth reading. But Guelzo's is quite simply the best book on Lincoln to be published in a generation. It treats every aspect of its subject's public and private life with intelligence and penetration (its portrait of the tortured courtship and marriage of Lincoln and the mercurial Mary Todd is among the most nuanced and discerning—and is certainly the most trenchant—I've read), but this is primarily a study of Lincoln's ideas and outlook. Guelzo precisely traces and explicates the roots and development of Lincoln's anti-Jeffersonian public philosophy and political economy (rightly emphasizing the far-reaching importance of his centralizing, nationalist economic policies—a subject most previous biographers

have woefully neglected) and of his views on slavery and race relations. Most important, however, Guelzo subtly examines Lincoln's personal struggles over religion and the complex ramifications of his deeply ingrained Calvinistic determinism. This book will forever change historians' understanding of Lincoln's view of the Civil War, and is essential if we are to apprehend how this despairing nonbeliever came to see the conflict (to quote Edmund Wilson) "in a light more and more religious, in more and more Scriptural terms, under a more and more apocalyptic aspect"—a process that culminated, of course, in his Second Inaugural Address, the most spiritually profound of our state papers. *Redeemer President*, which has just been released in paperback, won the 2000 Lincoln Prize and has been almost universally praised by academics—but was unconscionably ignored by all the major review outlets, perhaps because it was published by a firm specializing in scholarly theological titles. I hope that in this inexpensive and accessible format Guelzo's masterpiece will gain the wide attention it warrants.

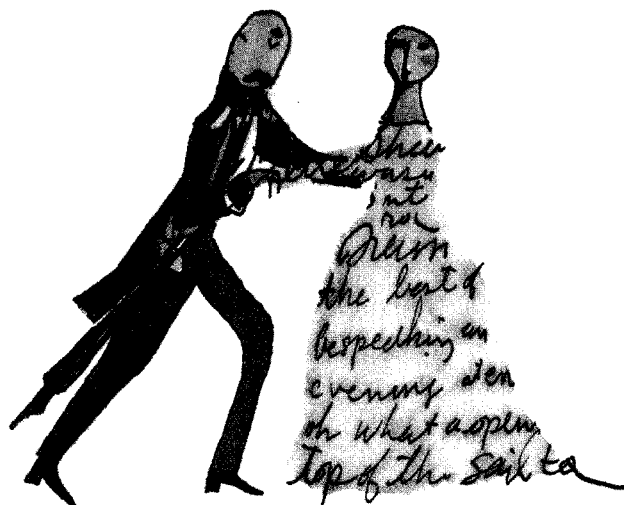
POWER AND PROFIT, by Peter Spufford (Thames & Hudson). Spufford, until 2001 the Professor of European History at Cambridge, has written the definitive history of commerce in the Middle Ages, a subject to which some of the most original medieval scholarship—including that of Fernand Braudel and Robert Lopez—has been devoted for the past forty or so years. He focuses on the effects in the 1300s of the previous century's so-called "commercial revolution," which saw innovations—in banking and credit, transport, manufacturing, and commercial organization—whose economic impact was in many ways as profound as that of the Industrial Revolution, and which engendered a level of economic activity unmatched until the 1700s. And he has synthesized an astonishing range of recondite secondary sources, from "Medieval Silks in Montpellier: the Silk Market, ca. 1250–ca. 1350" to *English Tin Production and Trade Before 1550* to "Beer Imports Into the Low Countries," in order to

elucidate the two poles of medieval commerce: the luxury trade in beeswax, spices, fur, cotton, glass, soap, carpets, and slaves, fueled by the royal and ecclesiastical courts; and the ordinary bulk trade in salt, grain, wine, timber, and cloth that provisioned the great cities of Paris, Milan, Florence, London, and Venice and supplied their manufacturers. Spufford is above all fascinated by the means of commerce—how fairs were organized and interest rates calculated, how merchants' alpine guides kept warm, how traders were accommodated, silver mined, and wool stretched. Having traveled the ancient routes of the merchants and their pack animals, Spufford arrestingly conveys the topographical and climatic backdrop of, and hindrances to, trade. This book would not be nearly so effective without his aptly chosen, authoritative, and often wryly captioned illustrations, mostly details from paintings and illuminated manuscripts; it and Nicholas Orme's *Medieval Children* are the most beautiful and intelligently designed works of scholarship I've encountered in recent years.

ARCHITECTURE

DANIEL H. BURNHAM, by *Kristen Schaffer*, edited by Scott J. Tilden, photographs by Paul Rocheleau (Rizzoli). In addition to designing and developing Chicago's lakefront (specifically the magnificent Lake Shore Drive and its attendant system of parks), Daniel H. Burnham (1846–1912) led the design teams that built a large number of the canonical structures of American architecture—including New York's Flatiron Building, famously depicted in photographs by Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen. But his legacy is often overlooked, owing largely to the attention lavished on his partner and close friend, John W. Root. Schaffer clarifies the creative collaboration between the two, thereby accentuating Burnham's role. More important, Schaffer, Tilden, and Rocheleau pay particular attention to Burnham's astonishing work after

Root's death, especially his Reliance Building and the Railway Exchange Building (at last there's a proper appreciation of this supremely refined structure). But the volume's best feature is Paul Rocheleau's precise yet luxurious photography, which conveys Burnham's extraordinary artistic range. Rocheleau captures the simplicity and power of the Montauk and Monadnock Buildings, the golden light that infuses the Rookery Building, and the Beaux Arts grandeur of Washington's Union Station. His best photographic studies, though, are of the Reliance and the Railway Exchange, which reveal their functionalist elegance, their lively ex-



pression of steel framing (gently undulating curtain walls of terra cotta and glass form a thin skin stretched over structural skeletons), and the purity and exactness of their proportions and details. (All the edifices pictured by Rocheleau are still very much working buildings, and have been remarkably well preserved or lovingly renovated.) Studying these photographs is a sensuous delight (the creamy white glaze on the terra-cotta sheathing of the Railway Exchange's lobby is like the frosting on a cake), and they allow the reader to appreciate just what the great Louis Sullivan meant when he wrote that Burnham's buildings "rose sheer and stark, with a subtlety of line and surface ... that gave one the thrill of romance."

THE CHICAGO AUDITORIUM BUILDING, by *Joseph M. Siry* (Chicago). Whereas

Burnham is the most inexcusably neglected of Chicago's nineteenth-century architects, Louis Sullivan is justifiably the most celebrated. From 1886 to 1890 Sullivan and Dankmar Adler (with the young Frank Lloyd Wright serving as their chief draftsman) designed and built the Auditorium Building—the structure that established the city's architectural reputation. The building integrated a 4,200-seat theater, a 400-room hotel, and a high-rent tower containing 136 offices. It was magnificent, and it was monumental; only America's great railway terminals matched it in size and complexity. Its exterior walls, of solid masonry, are

nearly devoid of ornament; Sullivan concentrated instead on the aesthetic effect of mass and texture and of the proportioning of large, simple elements. But his soaring, highly decorated interiors exhibit his penchant for the lyric and romantic; this gigantic structure manages—like most of Sullivan's greatest achievements—to be at once handsome and sprightly. Part of the publisher's authoritative series *Chicago Architecture and Urbanism*, Siry's meticulous, abundantly illustrated, and wide-ranging

550-page chronicle of the building's funding, design, and construction is as much a social history as an architectural one. He explicates, for instance, the social and commercial role of nineteenth-century hotels, and—most important—shows how, in the years after the Haymarket riot, the edifice embodied the progressive capitalist ideal of its principal patron, Ferdinand W. Peck, which was to build a democratic variation on the European opera house that would offer affordable performing art to both the city's elite and its skilled work force. Siry also details (in an approach that is somewhat refreshing for an art historian) the building's triumph in engineering as well as in aesthetic design; Adler's mastery of the enormous technical problems it presented, from foundations to hydraulics (for the mechanical equipment of the stage) to



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acoustics (Wright asserted in 1941 that the building contained "the greatest room for music and opera in the world today, bar none"), puts him among the most important engineers of the nineteenth century. Read either Siry's or Schaffer's books with Lewis Mumford's classic *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts of America, 1865-1895*, a brilliant work that rightly adulates Sullivan though it all but ignores Burnham.

LITERARY STUDIES

THE GIRL FROM THE FICTION DEPARTMENT, by Hilary Spurling (Counterpoint). Sonia Brownell, a young, smart, and pretentious beauty with a reputation for what would once have been called promiscuity, married the lonely and cadaverous George Orwell on his deathbed. She has ever since been regarded by many as something of a literary gold digger, but she always had her partisans—and Spurling is by far her fiercest. Nearly every aspect of Sonia's behavior concerning Orwell is disputed (Was she or was she not nightclubbing with her former lover, Lucian Freud, when Orwell died? How often and for how long did she visit Orwell in his final days?), so there's room for a charitable interpretation of this difficult woman. Sonia certainly had her strong points, including charisma: she was the inspiration for the bossy and earthy Julia ("the girl from the fiction department") in *Nineteen Eighty-four*, and Anthony Powell, Marguerite Duras, and Angus Wilson (Sonia discovered him for the literary magazine *Horizon*) all based fictional characters on her. Jean Rhys, Cyril Connolly (her boss at *Horizon*), Stephen Spender, Ivy Compton-Burnett, Mary McCarthy, and Francis Bacon also enjoyed her loyal and generous, if capricious, friendship. Many have judged Sonia as the tyrannical and grasping executrix of Orwell's literary estate, but her careful co-editing of the 1968 four-volume collection of Orwell's essays, journalism, and letters unquestionably solidified his reputation as the one twentieth-century writer who elevated journalism to an art. Nevertheless, Spurling, a distinguished biographer who was close to Sonia for the last

decade of her life, ignores or thoughtlessly dismisses many of the unsavory accusations leveled against her subject, making this at best a prejudiced—and at worst an unreliable—life history. Spurling's desire to salvage her friend's reputation also lends a breathless, frenetic, and at times sloppy quality to her prose: Sonia's visits, Spurling writes, "lifted her friends' spirits like the sun coming out." And Sonia was daunted by the "enormity" [sic] of the task of editing *The Collected Essays*. Far too ardent, this is nevertheless a needed corrective to the beating Sonia has taken from many of Orwell's biographers.

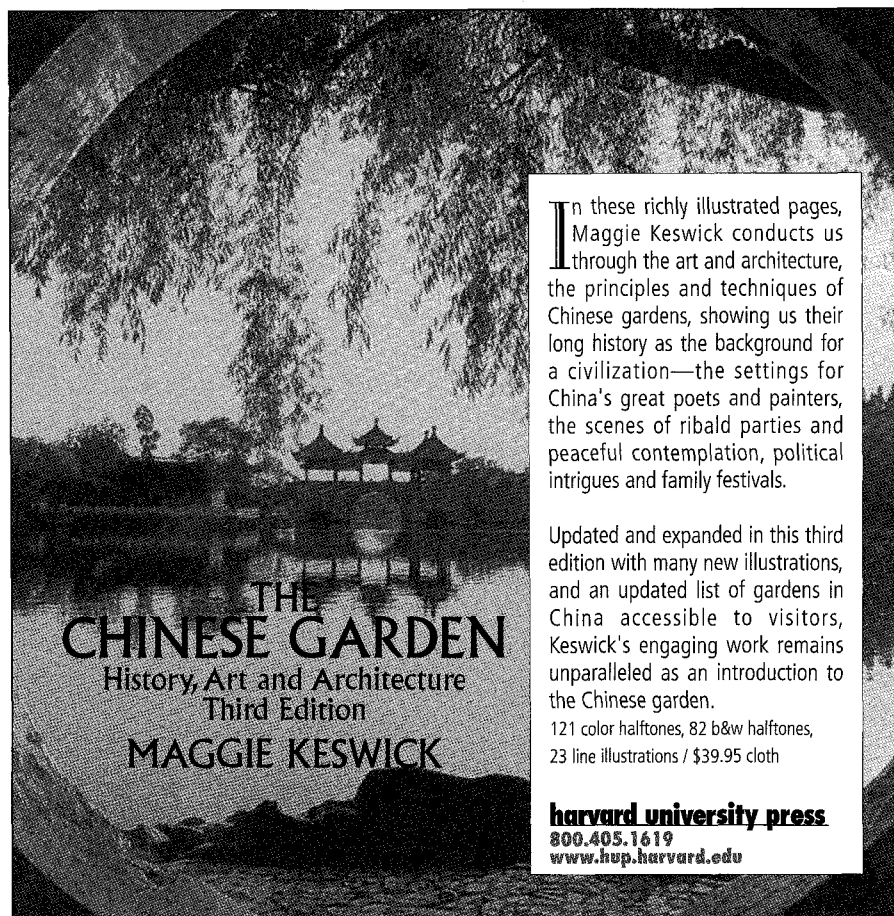
SCENES FROM AN AFTERLIFE: THE LEGACY OF GEORGE ORWELL, by John Rodden (ISI Books). Yes, yes, more Orwelliana. (Books about Orwell will be thick on the ground by the end of this year, which is the centenary of his birth.) Although many regard Orwell as the most important writer of the twentieth century, there are no fully satisfying, comprehensive examinations of his work. The problem with Orwell is that, as he wrote of Charles Dickens, he's a writer "well worth stealing." For more than half a century he's been enlisted in causes that weren't his own—celebrated and fought over by anarchists and Cold War liberals, by the Old Left and the New Left, by socialists and neoconservatives. For example, Christopher Hollis, his friend from Eton, wrote an important study highlighting aspects of Orwell's ideas that conformed to Hollis's Catholic, conservative, anti-capitalist world view. Such an account of the writings of an avowed atheist and socialist (albeit one who averred that "the worst advertisement for Socialism is its adherents") is obviously partial, in both senses of the word—although no more partial than, say, the often astute study by another of Orwell's friends, the anarchist George Woodcock, who argued that Orwell was at bottom (no surprise) an anarchist. Rodden's previous volume, the exceptionally imaginative and synthetic *The Politics of Literary Reputation*, is the best book on Orwell, even though in it Rodden scrutinizes not Orwell's work but, rather, how others have appropriated that work and how

Orwell's reputation has developed over time. *Scenes From an Afterlife*, essentially a collection of unconnected essays on Orwell, is far less ambitious and, because it often regurgitates Rodden's earlier ideas, somewhat disappointing. It nonetheless contains a great many insights. In dissecting Orwell's politics Rodden rightly emphasizes his nostalgic populism and his deep debt to William Cobbett and Dickens; Orwell was, as he puts it, "a nineteenth-century radical who turned skeptical and pessimistic given the specter of a totalitarian future." In other chapters Rodden keenly limns Marx's influence on Orwell, and Orwell's views on religion. (Here Rodden should have examined more thoroughly Orwell's conviction that liberal society cannot satisfactorily survive on its own rational resources and utilitarian axioms, unsustained by a faith that exalts love and community over egoism and self-interest. After all, Orwell wrote that Marx's line "Religion is the opium of the people" needed to be placed in context with the line that precedes it: "Religion is the sigh of the soul in a soulless world.") Rodden is especially perceptive concerning Orwell's asceticism. To be sure, this self-deprivation—or self-obliviousness—had an endearing aspect (although Rodden doesn't quote this, Orwell, typically, pronounced Britain's wartime canteen food "really very good"), but it also evinced a disturbing streak of masochism (and in subjecting his ailing first wife, Eileen, to his life of excruciating self-denial, perhaps even of sadism). No writer in English has more often been likened to a saint than Orwell. But Orwell himself wrote that "saints should always be judged guilty until they are proved innocent." Rodden's portrait offers further evidence confirming Malcolm Muggeridge's judgment that Orwell was "more lovable than likeable." ■

Benjamin Schwarz is the literary editor of The Atlantic.

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THE RELUCTANT FAN

Professional baseball's lachrymose and soporific spell

BY DAVID KIPEN

.....

My wife drew a blank this morning when I asked her what Joe DiMaggio, Jackie Robinson, and Ted Williams had in common. Thinking cap firmly in place, she did hazard a guess: "They're all baseball players?" (She meant this as a joke, she says now.) "They all hit home runs? In the World Series?" This was getting us nowhere. It was time to turn over all the cards, as they used to say on *What's My Line?*, and spill. Unfortunately, I was spilling already—misting up, or starting to, as I sometimes do when the conversation turns to baseball.

Misting up is one of two physiological reactions the game tends to produce in me. The other, a symptom I regularly present in the later innings of most game broadcasts, is unconsciousness. At first, when on the couch with the remote, or in the study with the computer, or in bed with an ear over the pillow speaker, I'm in heaven. Too soon, though, heaven is forsaken for dreamland. Something about a postgame show always wakes me up, but sleep usually makes a comeback before I can hear what the final score was. It's like radio traffic reports: We wait forever to hear one, but when we do, our attention falters before the announcer can get around to the route we want. "Hey, did she mention the 101 yet?"

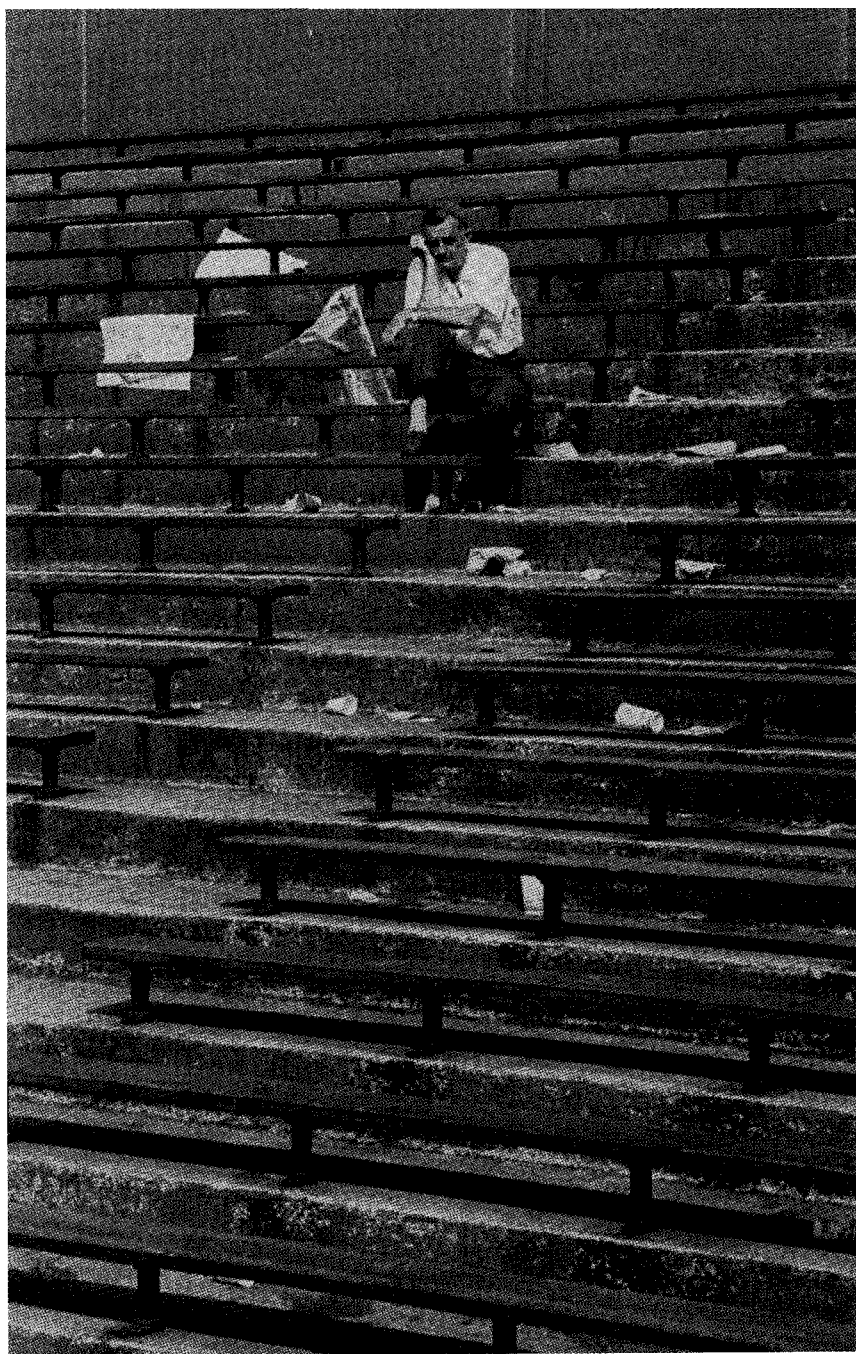
Tears and snores. One wouldn't think the same stimulus could produce two such divergent responses, but then, baseball has never been an oasis of strict causality. Sneak a bad pitch past a napping hitter and you're a hero. Snap off a wicked curveball and get beat on an excuse-me swing. Logical it's not. How to explain a game (to the uninitiated, or even to initiates) that has us choking up like a pesky bunter one minute, and nodding off the next?

The stock answers are that we weep from nostalgia, and we doze out of boredom. According to this line of thinking, we're tired of greedy owners, and of overpaid ballplayers who change

teams so often that we're left rooting for little more than an empty uniform. We pine for the game of our childhoods, when salaries were lower, tickets cheaper, and all the grass—if not greener—was at least real.

Andrew Zimbalist is here to tell you that the stock answers are, like a

batting-practice pitcher's aim, all too true—yet inadequate. A professor at Smith, Zimbalist argues persuasively that the biggest problem with baseball today is the monopoly power exercised by the owners running it. Undergirding this power is baseball's antitrust exemption, as enshrined in 1922 by Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. in *Federal Baseball Club of Baltimore v. National League of Professional Baseball Clubs*. Although a wise and witty man (whose father helped to found this magazine), Justice Holmes appears, in retrospect, to have rendered one of the



YALE JOEL/TIME LIFE PICTURES

Court's more cockeyed decisions here. Through it the Court held baseball immune from antitrust laws governing interstate commerce on the grounds that because crossing state lines to play ball was "a mere incident, not the essential thing," and because playing amounted to "personal effort, not related to production," professional baseball was neither interstate nor commerce. Whatever the merits of these findings in 1922, before pro ball went west and became a multi-billion-dollar industry, it's a toss-up which half of the argument looks more ludicrous now.

To give us some idea what he thinks of *Federal Baseball*, Zimbalist makes a habit of referring to "baseball's presumed antitrust exemption." If this monopolistic exemption were repealed, he contends, market forces would distribute talent more evenly; players would no longer have to strike whenever the general agreement came up for renegotiation; financially mismanaged teams would fold, and the rest would make enough money to quit plead-

ing poverty all the time; cities could more easily resist owners' shaking them down for public funds to build new stadiums; and Zimbalist's bogeyman, baseball commissioner Bud Selig, might finally be out of a job. That's a lot of hopes to pin on an idea that nobody has exactly tried yet, especially with the owners' lobbyists and lawyers ready to make a meal of any member of Congress who tries anew to reconsider the exemption. But Zimbalist had me believing him almost all the way. He adduces pertinent statistics and historical parallels from football and basketball—both of which have by most yardsticks eclipsed baseball in popularity, and without the dubious benefit of an antitrust exemption. In addition, Zimbalist documents instances in which team accountants' massaging of club finances has called to mind another profession—one for which massage often serves as a handy euphemism. Ever since the publication of Zimbalist's somewhat dated but more accessible *Baseball and Billions* (1992), owners have been trying everything to discredit his figures—

everything, naturally, except opening up their books to public scrutiny.

Of course, one can be glad a book exists without especially enjoying the act of reading it. Zimbalist's actuarial prose style doesn't do much to help his case. Too often he writes like the little kid who used to keep score at home during NBC's *Saturday Game of the Week*. We now have a good idea what happened to that kid: he grew up to be an economist (like Zimbalist), a baseball statistician (a career for which Zimbalist shows great aptitude, in case the Robert A. Woods chair at Smith ever slips out from under him), or, well, *me*. The only time Zimbalist's learning plays him false is when he mistakenly writes that "in 1988 the Twins became the first MLB team to surpass the 3 mil-

lion mark in annual attendance." He should have said the Twins became the first *American League* team. The first major-league baseball team to pass three million, fully ten years earlier, was the National League's

Dodgers—something Zimbalist can be excused for not knowing, since he probably didn't cut sophomore Spanish with Alan Foonberg to watch them do it.

The sportscaster Bob Costas contributes a brief, cogent foreword. To say it's the most engaging writing in the book would be like saying Costas is the most eloquent sportscaster currently on a national network. This is an achievement? *May the Best Team Win* should be Exhibit A the next time Senator Patrick Leahy or any other quixotic statesman calls hearings to explore the removal of baseball's antitrust exemption—just so long as he doesn't make the mistake of trying to keep himself awake during a filibuster by reading it aloud.

Yet even if Zimbalist succeeded utterly, even if pro baseball lost its exemption and mended its ways and started acting more like a good citizen and less like OPEC, the problems of nostalgia and boredom would still be with us. Here a fan gets into dicey territory. In fan-nonfan relations, even to use the word "boredom" is to give

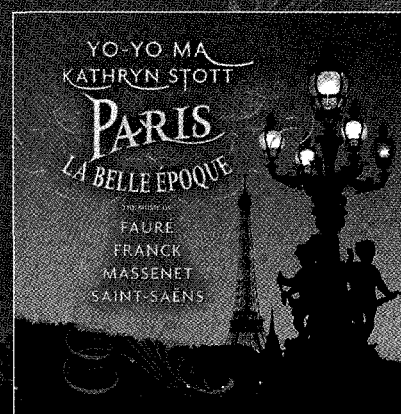
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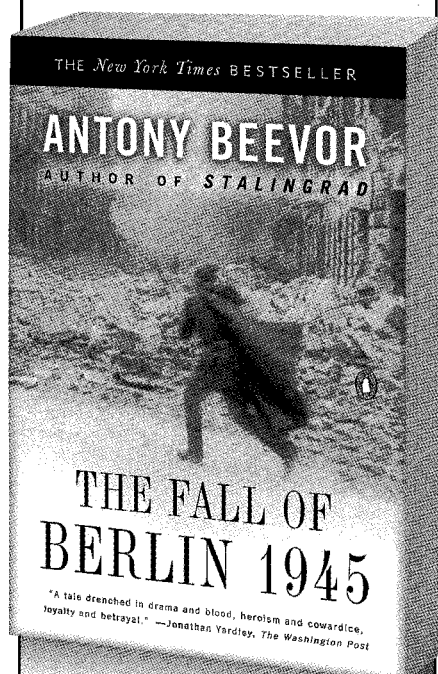
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ground one may never get back. Boredom in baseball is like Israel's nuclear bomb: everyone knows it exists, and everyone agrees to pretend it doesn't.

Yet torpor will out. Under the lovely, elegiac pastel haze, among all the hymns to the game's timelessness and craft, hides a secret shame. It's there in the 1911 book *America's National Game* (which has been reissued by the University of Nebraska Press), by the player, executive, and manufacturer Albert G. Spalding, who wrote that "two hours is about as long as an American can wait for the close of a Base Ball game—or anything else, for that matter." It's there in Philip Roth's essay "My Baseball Years," from *Reading Myself and Others*: "Baseball—with its lore and legends, its cultural power, its seasonal associations, its native authenticity, its simple rules and transparent strategies, its longueurs and thrills, its spaciousness, its suspensefulness, its heroics, its nuances, its lingo, its 'characters,' its peculiarly hypnotic tedium, its mythic transformation of the immediate—was the literature of my boyhood." Hypnotic tedium. Has anyone ever put it better? Maybe only Don DeLillo, in the prologue to *Underworld*: "Dodgers go down in the top of the ninth and this is when you sense a helpless scattering, it is tastable in the air, audible in the lonesome wolf calls from high in the stands. Nothing you've put into this is recoverable ..."

Unrecoverable. Is it any wonder baseball makes us choke up? Three hours a day, six months a year, the baseball fan commits himself to the game. Multitasking or mono-tasking, we carry it wherever we go. He listens. She watches. Next morning they read the game story, scan the box scores. On our deathbeds, surrounded by loved ones we almost remember ("Didn't you fetch me some Twizzlers once?"), we'll add up all the hours. Where is the return on all this time? As it says on the ticket stub, "nonrefundable."

Wait, the fan pleads, hold on. Isn't every game unique, like a snowflake? This is the most pathetic dodge of all. As if the 9-2 blowout we fidgeted through when we were five differed in some qualitative, unmistakable way from the 9-2 blowout we drowsed

through at forty. Because the last batter fouled off six pitches instead of eight, perhaps, before he struck out looking?

And yet the two games *were* different. Not because the box scores diverged by a one here or a zero there, but because the fan at five takes in a rout differently from the fan at forty. The young fan will admit to boredom freely, griping and whining about it. The adult fan won't. Either he turns away from the game—and some can, for the day or even for life—or he sits there and takes it, mind wandering guiltily, flirting with sleep. Boredom is a luxury of the young.

Here, at last, is how baseball works its lachrymose and soporific spell on us: we feel nostalgia and boredom, yes, but more than that, we feel nostalgia *for* boredom, for youth's immensities of wastable time. The lovely poem "Spring and Fall: To a Young Child," by Gerard Manley Hopkins, a man who held no particular brief for baseball one way or the other, begins, "Margaret, are you grieving / Over Goldengrove unleaving?" To be flat-footed about it, Margaret is a girl distraught over the arrival of autumn and the loss of leaves from a favorite copse. For a dozen lines or so the speaker consoles her as best he can. Then, in fittingly arboreal language, he delivers a couplet that distills Margaret's sorrow, and with it that of every grown-up ball fan who ever wondered how a simple game could become so complicated: "It is the blight man was born for, / It is Margaret you mourn for."

A baseball is a skin full of different yarns, wound so intricately that strangers with nothing in common save the game—economists and novelists, say—need never want for something to chew over. Baseball diamonds have preserved more marriages than any other kind. (By the way, Joe DiMaggio learned how to play ball in San Francisco, Ted Williams in San Diego, and Jackie Robinson in Pasadena: Californians all.) The game was codified by a man, Alexander Cartwright, whose middle name was Joy. I follow baseball, through the boredom, through the greed, and when I try to stop, it follows me. ▀

David Kipen is the book critic for the San Francisco Chronicle.



BOOKS

AURAL HISTORY

The doyen of capital insiders has written a misleading account of the debate that led to war

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

.....

The preferred excuse for most journalistic prose—that it is “the first draft of history”—has long found its supposed apotheosis in the work of Bob Woodward. Russell Baker once described the life of the Washington-beat reporter as requiring one to become “a megaphone for the convenience of frauds,” and Woodward has alternately upgraded and downgraded the job description. His work with Carl Bernstein helped to bring down a psychopathic President but was heavily influenced by the wishes and timing of (we suppose) a single source. His work with David Broder (*The Man Who Would Be President: Dan*

Quayle) was facilitated by a much more transparent “access,” and I can’t help noticing that it is no longer cited, not even in the titles assembled on Woodward’s own dust jacket.

Oscillating between that zenith and that nadir, the doyen of capital insiders has usually settled for a hybrid of investigation, damage control, stenography, and the megaphone. His book *Veil*, for example, contained much

useful background on the subversion of the Constitution that was Iran-contra, but in its preposterous assertion of a cryptic deathbed confession by William Casey did much to promote the false hypothesis that Ronald Reagan’s most

trusted spook had acted on no authority but his own. A more recent volume, about the refulgent mystery of Alan Greenspan, is a partial guide to the politics of the Federal Reserve but needs only its title—*Maestro*—to convey such flavor as it possesses.

With *Bush at War*, however, Woodward has presented an account that not only was out of date almost as soon as it was published but also conveys a story line that is misleading from first to last. This represents a qualitative decline, both for the author and for the genre of investigative journalism. I am writing this on the opening day of March 2003. By the time you read it, American and other forces may have put an end to the regime of Saddam Hussein and made themselves the masters of Mesopotamia. Or there may have been a world-historical fiasco. In either event, it will be possible to say that the best seller on the origins of the conflict, published while the argument over whether to invade Iraq was at its most intense, was the worst imaginable guide and would appear to have been (in two senses of the term) dictated. Under the guise of disinterest it transmits only the shallowest and most ephemeral interpretation of events.

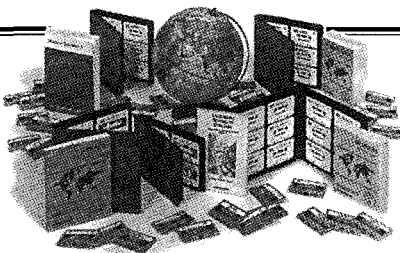
It has long been possible, even in the outermost circles of the journalistic trade, to guess who talked to Woodward. One looks for the passages of sycophancy and works backward from there. Thus we can tell that George Tenet was helpful as soon as he is described as the “hefty, outgoing son of Greek immigrants”—even before we read that he always grasped the root of the matter.

Tenet had developed an understanding of the importance of human intelligence, HUMINT in spycraft ... Without case officers, Tenet knew, there would be no human sources to provide intelligence, no access to governments, opposition groups or other organizations abroad, little inside information, little opportunity for covert action.

(This is distinctly deferential, obscuring as it does the fact that the only American who managed to penetrate first the Taliban and then al Qaeda was the sorry loser John Walker Lindh, former resident of Marin County.) Then there are

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the non sequiturs that cover other shameful holes in the apologia for Tenet.

In 1999, the CIA commenced a covert operation to train 60 commandos from the Pakistani intelligence agency to enter Afghanistan to capture bin Laden. But the operation was aborted because of a coup in Pakistan.

In what sense can Woodward claim to "know" this? He fairly obviously didn't research it himself. Nor does he seem to have asked his source any of the obvious questions when he was fed it. Since when did the CIA find conservative military coups making its life more difficult? And was the Pakistani intelligence agency—the ISI, or Inter-Services Intelligence, to use its proper name—not one of the engines of that very coup? But any further inquiry along those lines would have disclosed that the ISI was an original patron of the Taliban, a fact "knowable" by anyone yet inconvenient for the ISI's senior partner in Langley, Virginia, to admit.

Another way to be certain that a senior source cooperated is to read Woodward ventriloquizing his or her profoundest inner thoughts. Thus we can be sure that Colin Powell is on board as soon as we learn that he got on a plane in Peru shortly after the aggressors struck on September 11 and "started to scribble notes to himself"

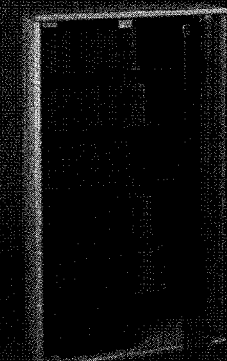
Ever the soldier, he wrote, What are my people going to be responsible for? How is the world, the United States going to respond to this? What about the United Nations? What about NATO? How do I start calling people together? The seven hours of isolation seemed an eternity for the man who could have been commander in chief.

I had no idea that this was what soldiers reflexively did. I do know that if it had been left up to Powell, Kuwait would still be the nineteenth province of Iraq, and Bosnia would be part of Greater Serbia. (I know some of this from reading Woodward's book on the first Gulf War, *The Commanders*, which has Powell opposing even a token move at the initial warning of Saddam's invasion.)

Richard Armitage must have talked freely to Woodward, because he turns out to be "an outspoken, muscular, barrel-chested man who deplored fancy-

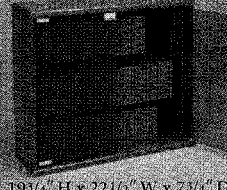
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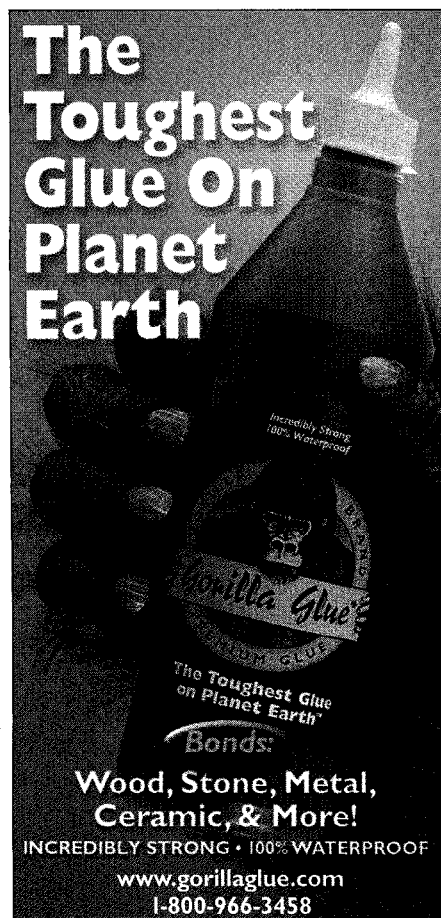
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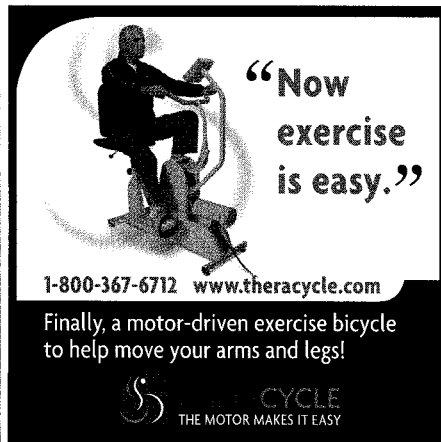
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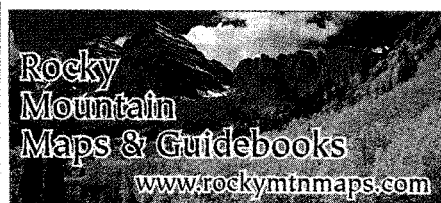
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pants, pin-striped diplomatic talk.” Furthermore, “Even before they took over the State Department, Powell and Armitage talked several times each day. ‘I would trust him with my life, my children, my reputation, everything I have,’ Powell said of Armitage.” In theory, this husky male bonding should have been qualified just a little bit by Powell’s dogmatic insistence on fancy-pants, pin-striped diplomatic talk. But since precisely such verbiage is the stuff of moral and political heroism in the remainder of the narrative, this thought, too, is prevented from emerging.

I think we may be sure that Condoleezza Rice was a willing accomplice in Woodward’s enterprise, and not just because she is depicted at Camp David on the first traumatic September weekend, leading the team after dinner “in a sing-along of American standards including ‘Old Man River,’ ‘Nobody Knows The Trouble I’ve Seen’ and ‘America The Beautiful.’” Wish I’d been there to see it. (Who guessed that so many Republicans knew the words to the first two?)

Literal rendition may be the price that journalism pays for access, and every reporter in Washington knows that some massaging of sources is necessary from time to time. It’s not just the abjectness of Woodward, however, that causes the gorge to rise. He purports to describe a serious division of opinion within the Administration, certainly the most momentous internal dispute seen in Washington in many years; but in default of a courtier relationship between himself and those involved, he simply declines to state their cases in full or, in some instances, to state them at all. In his index appears the entry “Rumsfeld, Donald H., author’s interviews with, 319–321.” That doesn’t sound like very many pages, now does it? Turn to these pages and you find the following: It seems that in January of 2002 Woodward and his *Washington Post* colleague Dan Balz interviewed Donald Rumsfeld and asked him about his desire to include Iraq in the riposte to the previous September’s attacks. The Secretary of Defense intemperately refused to discuss the question and suggested that classified

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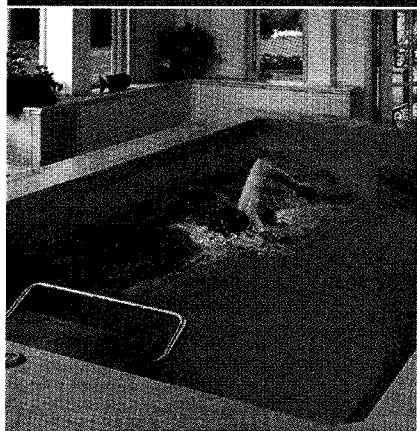
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material must have been leaked in order for it to be asked. Woodward smugly condenses what was a nineteen-page transcript into twenty-three lines of text. The remaining page and a half is devoted to a chance encounter two months later between Woodward and Rumsfeld on the steps of the Pentagon, where the Secretary orated briefly about the number of warnings of terrorist attack that had been overlooked in the past.

"They'll hit us again," Rumsfeld said in a matter-of-fact tone. "We have them off balance." He then jabbed three of his fingers into the center of my chest, tipping me back and slightly off balance. Nice wrestling move, I thought, but then I shifted forward, taking the bait. I said that it was not enough because I had regained my balance rather quickly.

I doubt that Woodward could produce a tape or a second source or any of the usual pedantic *Washington Post* requirements to confirm this story, which represents Rumsfeld as an oddball with apparently contradictory views and scant respect for a reporter's "personal space." It also chances to represent Woodward himself as a man whose wits (and wit) are about him at all times. No doubt some meeting of the sort occurred. But these flimsy paragraphs call attention to a rather peculiar fact. Apparently nobody senior at the Department of Defense was willing to talk much to Woodward. Surely this is something of a shortcoming in a book titled *Bush at War*.

As it happens, I know without asking that the Pentagon team members decided to be closemouthed and were annoyed to find that their rivals at State had bumbled so freely. Not only did they burble freely but—and this must count as a great Washington twofer—they got credit from Woodward for being discreet! Only one page after his truncated and essentially valueless descriptions of those brief collisions with Rumsfeld, he writes,

One of Powell's greatest difficulties was that he was more or less supposed to pretend in public that the sharp differences in the war cabinet did not exist. The president would

not tolerate public discord. Powell was also held in check by his own code—a soldier obeys.

Here the book becomes a satire on itself—not only because it reports with some satisfaction that Powell was given to rolling his eyes when Iraq was mentioned in high-level meetings (something Woodward certainly didn't learn from a neutral attendee) but also because it gives great weight to something that everybody knows about: Powell's public rudeness when Wolfowitz spoke of state-supported terrorism. Powell made an open, on-the-record statement that the deputy secretary of defense could "speak for himself." "Public discord" doesn't begin to describe it. "More or less" must have been inserted in the preceding excerpt with a last-minute editorial blush. For many months Colin Powell happily ridiculed anybody who thought that Saddam Hussein was an enemy, or could even turn out to be one.

Those who read this book after January of 2003 must have found it bewildering. By that time Powell and Armitage and Tenet and Rice had made and were making big names for themselves by slamming Iraq for its habitual connection to the underworld of international gangsterism, denouncing Saddam Hussein for his long history of aggression, and exposing his regime's chronic contempt for arms control. From being lectured by the United Nations, Colin Powell became someone who lectured back. Now, why and how was that? How did events or arguments persuade the ethereally detached Powell to change his mind?

I should perhaps answer my own question here. At least three elements evidently played their part in the Secretary of State's U-turn. He was plainly irritated by the exorbitant national egoism of the French political leadership. He was evidently impressed by the flagrancy of Iraq's defiance of Resolution 1441. He must have been correspondingly struck by the amount of incriminating evidence, produced by a rather reluctant CIA, of the overlap between Baathist and bin Ladenist designs. But, as his whole career has illus-

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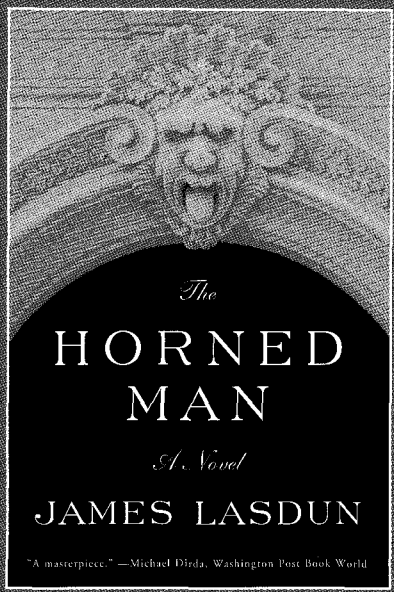
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trated, ever since his days as a conformist White House fellow during Watergate, Colin Powell has been a maestro (to employ a Woodwardism) when it comes to attaching himself ultimately to the winning side. This means, logically, that all the time that Woodward was writing his book, someone other than Powell was steadily winning over the President.

Woodward can give you no idea who. That is only partly because if one doesn't talk to him, one is not a player. It is more that one who doesn't oblige his deadline or his narcissism is a tree falling in a clearing with no sentient witness. A book about war and the rumor of war should be able to convey some idea of alternative world views and strategies, and of how these were debated. This account does not fail in this task merely by omission. It gives a false picture of the argument as it actually occurred.

Here I can only state how I tried to satisfy my own extreme curiosity. Last November I crossed the Potomac (no harder for me to do than it would have been for Woodward, since we both live in Washington) and talked briefly to Paul Wolfowitz, in a government building that was still recovering from rather a major hit. It took me a while to persuade him to let me quote him, and I don't have permission to report all of our conversation. Still, some basic reporting can be done (and I think I can say without self-flattery or self-abnegation that I am not a conduit of choice for national-security leaking). Wolfowitz has a photograph on his wall, as Washingtonians tend to do. It shows a meeting in the White House situation room on a Sunday in February of 1986. President Reagan, in a plaid shirt, gazes down a table that seats George Shultz, Caspar Weinberger, George H.W. Bush, Philip Habib, and William Casey. Somewhat to the side sits a very tired-looking Wolfowitz. What is going on in this picture? It captures the moment when the U.S. government told Ferdinand Marcos, of the Philippines, that his one-man rule was a thing of the past. The Reagan Administration, with some reluctance, had come to the view that tolerating dictatorship was too high a price to pay for

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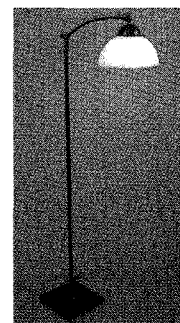
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military bases or for a "stability" that had become simultaneously sickening and chaotic. (Wolfowitz had argued this case to the Soviet ambassador in Manila, who had—with amazing consistency—recognized Marcos as the victor in an election that Cory Aquino actually won.) From then on, Wolfowitz told me with some satisfaction, there had been "corner shots" that led to democratic revolutions or evolutions in South Korea, Taiwan, and, eventually, Tiananmen Square, by which time we were in the *annus mirabilis* of 1989.

How does this bear on the apparently septic tank of the Middle East? Well, in the late 1970s Wolfowitz and others identified Saddam Hussein as a megalomaniac with ambitions to dominate the Gulf, and wrote reports that doubted the rightness of deputizing the Shah of Iran as an American proxy. The subsequent Iran-Iraq war did nothing to make them alter their original calculation. Nor did Reagan's decision to back Saddam against the Iranians as the "defender" of a Gulf that the Iraqi openly coveted. Nor did the first Bush Administration's lamentable decision to ignore the warnings of an assault on Kuwait. Nor, after the stench of Desert Storm had dissipated, did the decision to leave Saddam in place lest worse befall. Those who say that Wolfowitz has been fighting an old battle against a long-standing foe are quite right. (I interrupt myself briefly to say that Henry Kissinger, to whom Wolfowitz is often compared as a "policy intellectual," endorsed the Shah to the end, opposed the decision to dump Marcos, defended the Chinese Communist Party's massacre in Tiananmen Square, and regarded the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe as destabilizing.)

Never mind whether I agree with the "hawks" or not; this is a vital set of facts no less than it is an important element in even the most quotidian analysis. Stated tersely, the serious "realist" view is that pluralism is less hazardous than a corrupt and autocratic client state. It's pretty obvious—here I rely on induction—what made the difference between 2001 and 2002 in the war councils of President Bush. The apparently trustworthy Saudi Arabians, who

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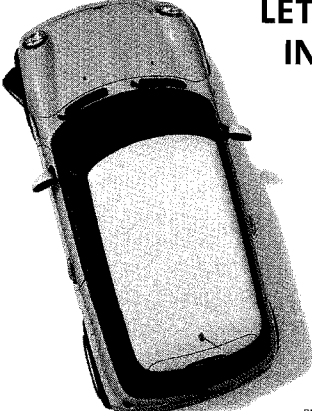
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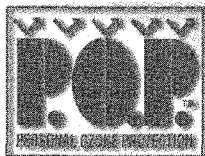
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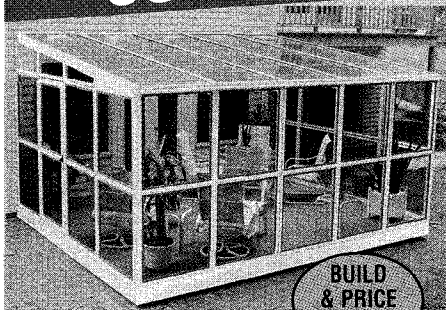
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had pleaded for an early end to the war against Saddam in 1991, also turned out to have been the moral and ideological incubators of Osama bin Laden. Their credit was very suddenly exhausted, as was that of those (Brent Scowcroft, Colin Powell) who had taken positions similar to the Saudi one. Those who thought there was a "root cause" of September 11 and that it lay in the proxy wars had a theory, and some proposals, and a record of correct predictions. Wolfowitz appears, slightly to his embarrassment, as the character Phil Gorman in Saul Bellow's novel *Ravelstein*. This fiction gives an admittedly superficial portrayal of the politico-philosophic school of Leo Strauss, at least as expressed through the somewhat ambiguous life of the late Allan Bloom. It's another "Chicago School," this time carefully grounded in the encoded study of Plato and Machiavelli. Again I'm guessing, but I think that Paul Wolfowitz isn't overly disconcerted by a political program—involving such things as the subtle destabilization of treacherous "allies"—that cannot be fully affirmed in public.

It's obviously too much to expect that Woodward would give himself to the analysis of *The Republic* or *The Prince*. But a good deal of Wolfowitz's political background is openly available, through "accessible" works such as Senator Richard Lugar's *Letters to the Next President* and *The Generals' War*, by Michael Gordon and General Bernard Trainor. So it's not just that *Bush at War* fails to prepare its readers even for a simple analysis of what has already happened, or that it occludes one side of a critical argument. The book does not try to be objective. It contains shifty untruths from those who collude, and represses basic factual material, gleanable from aides or from the public record, from the side of those who do not. It despises history and, as a partially ironic consequence, is outpaced by the present. It purports to be hard-headed, but is consistently wide-eyed and credulous. Pseudo-objectivity in the nation's capital is now overripe for regime change. ■

Christopher Hitchens is a columnist for Vanity Fair. His book Why Orwell Matters was published last November.

BOOK GROUP IN CHADORS

An outstanding and unusual memoir of post-revolutionary Iran

BY MONA SIMPSON

.....

Anyone who has ever held a job and ventured out on a blind date understands this paradox of intimacy: it is easier to become close to other people when not trying, while ostensibly doing something else. One of the pleasures that members of book groups everywhere discover is the gradual and delicately thrilling way in which they come to know one another as they talk about the books. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, a memoir by Azar Nafisi, the daughter of a former charismatic mayor of pre-revolutionary Tehran and of a woman who won a seat in Parliament in 1963, chronicles the personal and intellectual unfoldings of a private literature class she started in Tehran after she left her last teaching post. She'd resigned from the University of Tehran years earlier, refusing to wear the veil.

The group consists of seven women ("girls," she calls them), children of the revolution, greatly diverse in religious and political beliefs and backgrounds, who arrive at her house every Thursday morning for two years in the mid-1990s, take off their chadors and scarves, and talk about books—*Lolita*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Daisy Miller*, *Pride and Prejudice*. These young women, who outside the class struggle to live under the laws and potential daily humiliation of the Islamic Republic, make it painfully clear that we read not only for the most exalted but also for the most basic reasons. What reader has not compared his or her own love life to Swann's, or her own husband to Mr. Darcy? Yet these books take on added, ironic dimensions when we remember that the legal age for marriage in Iran at this time was nine (younger than *Lolita*), and that the punishment for female adultery, such as Daisy Buchanan's affair with *Gatsby*, was stoning. The one divorcee in the group, now remarried, gloves her red-polished nails, which constituted a punishable offense, as did

any makeup. "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a Muslim man, regardless of his fortune, must be in want of a nine-year-old virgin wife," says the youngest student in the group. Yet although Nafisi encourages extremely personal reading (when she realizes that almost all of her students accept the Islamic Republic's dogma about love—spiritual love good, sex bad—she supplements *Pride and Prejudice* with

Our Bodies, Ourselves), her analyses of the books are never simple or reductive. In all the novels she finds evil in the villains' lack of empathy, in an inability to

see and hear, to engage with, or even to dance with another person. "Humbert was a villain," she writes, "because he lacked curiosity about other people and their lives, even about the person he loved most."

Nafisi simply can't resist paradox. So although she writes about a society in which a woman can be jailed for dancing, punished for allowing a few strands of hair to fall on her face, disciplined for revealing her singing voice, or expelled from a university for the way she might eat a peach, she also tempts Western readers to marvel at the power this atavistic Iranian regime implicitly assigns to women's sexual allure.

Nafisi divides her book into four sections: "Lolita," "Gatsby," "James," and "Austen." The first introduces the reading group; "Gatsby" and "James" take us back to Nafisi's years teaching at universities in Iran, through the revolution and the war with Iraq. These two middle sections contain a pageant of drama—persecuted and executed professors; air raids; the regular clashes in class between Marxist and reactionary Muslim students; the death in jail of a particularly gifted student, who as a child stole books from the houses her mother cleaned; a young soldier who went to war and then returned to

READING LOLITA
IN TEHRAN

by Azar Nafisi

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a university where he'd never belonged and set himself on fire.

In the last section, "Austen," we finally learn about the personal lives of the girls. The "fairy-tale atmosphere" of these Thursday mornings spent talking about books allowed the eight women to "share so much of our secret life with one another." The wildest one, the divorcee with red nails, is beaten by her third husband, who calls her "used" because she has been married before. She cannot easily leave him, because the courts routinely grant child custody to husbands, and she has a young daughter. Two of the girls are happily enough married. One of them got to know her husband in a university class of Nafisi's. "Did you fall in love?" the teacher asks, as she seems relentlessly to ask everyone. "Well, yes, of course," the girl says, in an answer as revealing as a line of dialogue written by Austen. Sanaz, an attractive young woman from a good family, is jilted by the boy to whom she has been betrothed since childhood, presumably because after living in England for five years, he no longer wants the sheltered Muslim girl his parents have selected. And when Sanaz goes on vacation with five girlfriends, the Revolutionary Guard arrests and jails the six of them for "Western attitudes," and the girls are subjected to two virginity tests—the second because the first, conducted by a woman, is considered suspect. Another of the book-group members is being presented with a series of suitors for an arranged marriage; at the same time she is considering emigrating to the United States to continue her studies. To go or not to go is the question that seems to hover in the air for all these women except one, who is a devout Muslim and has decided to stay in Iran, not to marry, and to pursue a career in publishing.

In the way that some American Jews in the seventies read Roth and Bellow not only for their literary merit but also to determine whether their portrayals were "good for the Jews," some American Persians and Arabs may be concerned with whether Nafisi is "good for the Muslims." But Nafisi has an essentially romantic nature, and nowhere is it more apparent than in her politics. Watching the wreckage of the twentieth

century's revolutions from far away, one can all too easily forget the idealism present at the beginning of revolutionary societies, whether Islamic or Marxist, and the pull that memory exerts even on its opponents and defectors. Though Nafisi once left a job because she refused to wear the veil and later left her beloved country, her portrayal of Khomeini is not exactly one of a villain. Or if he is a villain, he's in the genre of villain that Humbert belongs to. "At the start of the revolution," she writes, "a rumor had taken root that Khomeini's image could be seen in the moon. Many people, even perfectly modern and educated individuals, came to believe this. They had seen him in the moon."

Nafisi, who spent years in Norman, Oklahoma, and loves Mike Gold, *Gatsby*, and Häagen-Dazs (she has the habit of eating coffee ice cream topped with cold coffee and walnuts whenever she's nervous), has some secrets of her own, which are only teasingly revealed to the readers of her memoir. She, too, struggles with the question of whether to stay or leave, and for her this question sometimes seems to refer not only to the Islamic Republic but also to her husband. Periodically she visits a man whom she calls "my magician," with whom she shares books and ideas, coffee and chocolate. These interludes are the most romantically written sections of the book (she grants her magician the ability to read a person's character from the shape of his nose), yet one feels that the pragmatism that could never govern her political impulses has a strong hold on her family life.

There are certain books by our most talented essayists—I'm thinking in particular of *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, by Joan Didion, and *Dakota*, by Kathleen Norris—that, though not necessarily better than their other works, carry inside their covers the heat and struggle of a life's central choice being made and the price being paid, while the writer tells us about other matters, and leaves behind a path of sadness and sparkling loss. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* is such a book. ■

Mona Simpson is the author of *A Regular Guy* (1996), *Off Keck Road* (2000), and other novels.

STILL GROWING

Michael Byers's first novel, though ambitious and often engaging, suggests that he hasn't yet made the leap from short stories

BY THOMAS MALLON

.....

Michael Byers published his first book, a collection of short stories, five years ago, at the age of twenty-eight. *The Coast of Good Intentions* was so precociously accomplished—almost weirdly mature—that it somehow makes sense for this still young author to have chosen a medical rarity he calls Hickman syndrome (his version of Hutchinson-Gilford disease) as the subject of his first novel. The brief lives of Hickman patients look like time-lapse photography: “arthritis at ten, osteoporosis for the girls at eleven, straight into senility before hitting puberty, and death from heart failure or simple old age by nineteen at the very latest.”

The central victim of *Long for This World* is the smart, funny fourteen-year-old William Durbin, a colossally good sport in the face of his genetic catastrophe. The reader has no trouble believing that Dr. Henry Moss, a nice-guy fifty-one-year-old Hickman researcher, has come to love William as much as he does his own normal, gawky son, Darren. Nor does the reader doubt that Henry will violate research protocol and risk his career in William's behalf after he discovers the disease's first “asymptomatic positive,” an arrogantly healthy boy named Thomas Benhamouda, who produces an “unprecedented enzyme” that keeps him from coming down with Hickman and that might, by injection, reverse the quickly dying William's symptoms.

Thomas isn't just free from the disease he carries on his anomalous eighth chromosome. This boy with unusually sweet breath (and a foul mouth) is corporeally almost perfect: “What dainty inner ears he had! What tidy nostrils! How his heart resounded behind his ribs!” His Hickman-thwarting enzyme could conceivably be the key not only to William's survival but to longer lives for the whole human race.

This long-shot possibility threatens to send Byers's delicate literary production off into the land of Robin Cook. The reader can occasionally feel the author fighting commercial temptation, struggling to content himself with the quiet philosophical opportunities his subject matter provides, the chance to ponder time's misaligning tricks. (When, thanks to Thomas's enzyme, William re-

juvenates slightly, Henry finds himself crying with joy and relief, “an old man, leaking tears everywhere he went.”) Byers's wariness

of seduction seems replicated in Henry, who wonders if the enzyme he has patented will be his own “faintly unsavory” shot at the big new money all around him. (The novel is set in late-1990s dot-com Seattle.)

To his credit, Byers keeps the book, and his career, serious. *Long for This World* remains, more than anything else, the sort of family drama common in modern American literary fiction. Henry's Austrian wife, Ilse, undergoes a believable midlife crisis—buying an old Vespa to scoot around on; giving up her job in hospital administration for “medical social work” downtown—and the couple's children are convincingly apportioned their shares of adolescent woe and charm. Byers, who excels at teenspeak, performs his best structural work in attaching Henry's offspring to their father's research drama. Darren makes friends with William (taking him out for a secret late-night ride on that Vespa), while Sandra, a six-foot-one high school basketball star (“this big piece of Henry wandering around in the world”), has to fight her attraction to Thomas. The book's minor characters are all well drawn, especially William's father, Bernie, a rich lawyer (“completely bald now ... a younger, more vital version of his son”), whose love and torment are established with

LONG FOR THIS WORLD

by Michael Byers

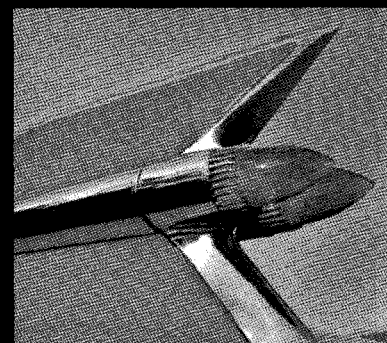
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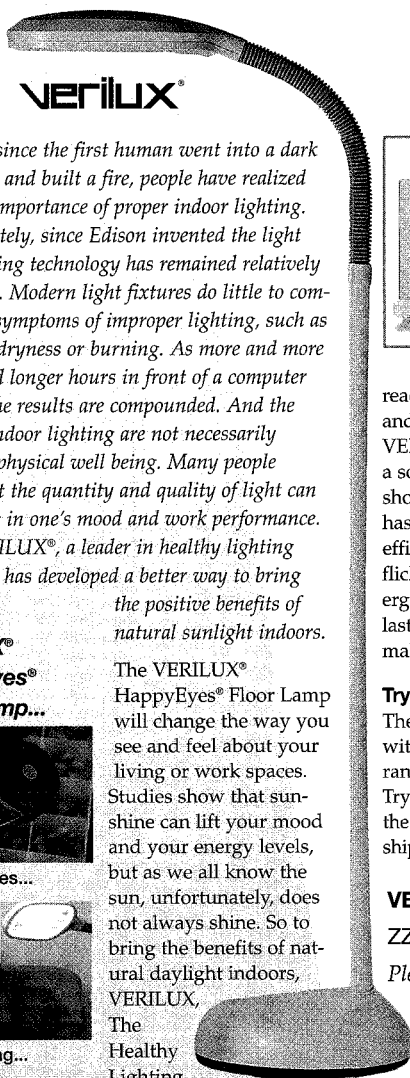
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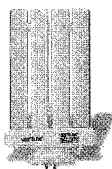
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heartbreaking exactitude. Given a couple more pages, he could have walked off with the novel.

Byers's feeling for his characters is part of his appreciative wonder at the world. ("Everything became history eventually, if you just left it alone.") He applies acute psychological touches (Henry allows William's mother to give her son the first injection) and displays a virtuosity with figurative language that puts him in a class with such new American masters as Charles Baxter and Antonya Nelson; a medical test entails "the disloyal leap of blood" into the needle that draws it.

Still, Byers has not quite made the leap to being a novelist, which requires a writer to grasp the paradox that the literary novel, in its embrace of more than sensibility and epiphany, needs to move *faster* than the short story. The longer form is at once more ample and less leisurely. Too often Byers won't drop the tufts of his novel's fabric from his own cherishing fingers. Much here could be abbreviated—the cascade of gross-out jokes between the boys, page after page about Sandra at basketball camp. When Ilse is out riding drunk on her scooter, finding the outdoors to be "overloaded with the details of the afternoon," Byers has just the excuse he craves to tell us that the vehicle in front of her is "an orange Stita taxi, radio-dispatched, EL3409, a Caprice Classic ..." The book's oddly forgettable title threatens to take on a third meaning—an insult to its pacing—in addition to the two conveying longevity and desire.

And if the novel refuses to explode in any gaudy best-selling way, it shouldn't just subside into anticlimax and its own loose ends. (Does the neighbor's suicide ever amount to anything? Does the discovery that Ilse's mother has money have any impact at all?) A lack of follow-through and shapeliness makes this book less than the sum of its excellent set pieces, which is to say that Michael Byers, a writer I'm eager to keep reading, needs one more growth spurt. ▮

Thomas Mallon is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic* and the author of *In Fact: Essays on Writers and Writing* (2001).

LOST IN TRANSLATION

Burton Raffel's English version of
Le Rouge et le Noir lacks the
 essential tone and style of Stendhal

BY PHILIP HENSHER

.....

Stendhal had an extraordinary degree of swagger—a word so completely appropriate to him that it's worth unpacking what, exactly, it means. "Swagger" suggests confident worldliness; it suggests magnificence and opulence; it might be applied to people who, though perhaps not amiable, command a certain respect. Most important, it implies an element of mild absurdity, even though—as distinct from "bluster," say—it reluctantly admits that the confidence has some solid basis. Swagger is the boasting of a man who, though he may exaggerate, has plenty to boast about.

In his greatest novels Stendhal dashes forward like a hussar, which Auden said only poets do; he is as direct and blunt in style as a gentleman is in conversation. His two masterpieces, *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *La Chartreuse de Parme*, along with several of his other works and fragments (*Lucien Leuwen*, his life of Rossini, his treatise on love), combine psychological intimacy with a thrilling cosmopolitanism. They are often highly sophisticated and modern in their presentation of individual desires and behavior, yet they never venture far from an extrovert's enthusiasm for melodrama. The width and richness of his interests remain unmatched among European novelists.

Few can rival the sheer intellectual power of Stendhal at his best. The opening pages of *La Chartreuse de Parme*, which set in motion a supremely assured account of a tumultuous passage of European history that unfolds with sustained and mounting irony, surpass anything even in *War and Peace*. The astonishing energy of *Le Rouge et le Noir* springs from its ability to take a sordid tale of seduction, attempted murder, and punishment and illuminate it with larger considerations (think of the ways in which *Othello* transforms

its source—a cheaply sensational and scandalous true-life anecdote). *Le Rouge et le Noir* demonstrates how personal ambition and sexual infatuation can be directed by the dream of becoming Napoleon. Apparently, certain of Stend-

THE RED AND THE BLACK

by Stendhal

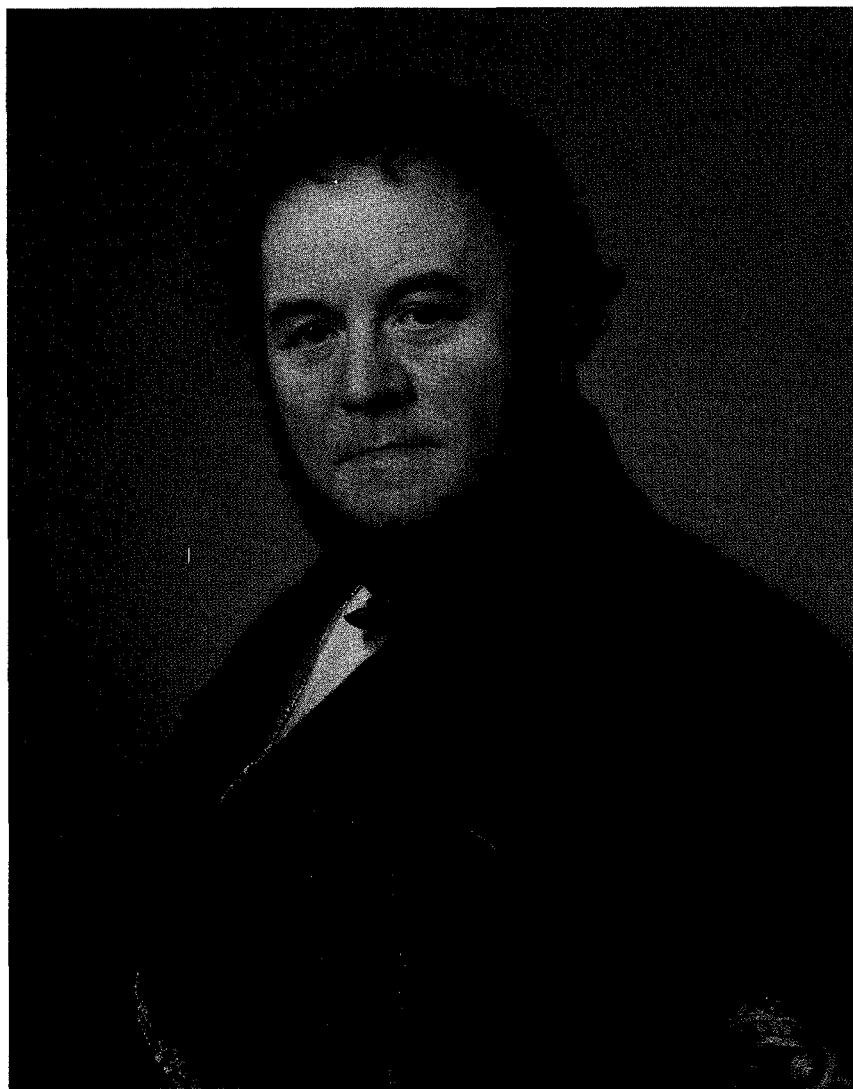
translated by Burton Raffel
 Modern Library

hal's emotions were directed in similar ways: after his death the writer Prosper Mérimée said that Stendhal "always seemed convinced by the idea, much canvassed under the Empire, that any woman may be taken by storm and that it is up to every man to attempt it." Stendhal's excellent biographer Jonathan Keates, after quoting Mérimée, makes explicit the model of "thrusting, restless imperial acquisitiveness provided by that ultimate totem Napoleon Bonaparte." Certainly, like many other novelists of nineteenth-century European realism, Stendhal felt his imaginative pulse quicken whenever

he thought of Napoleon. *La Chartreuse de Parme* moves into a higher register of power and strangeness as it approaches the Battle of Waterloo, capturing both that conflict's heroism and its absurdity.

The two principal novels seemed to come out of nowhere: *La Chartreuse de Parme* was, famously, written in no more than seven weeks. Where they came from in reality was a series of failed and incomplete projects, from the near masterpiece *Lucien Leuwen* to brilliant ideas scribbled down and hardly moved forward. Stendhal's life was one of aggressively taken risks and engineered encounters with the great. Best known, perhaps, was his passing acquaintance with Byron in Milan in 1816—an episode that has had Stendhalians and Byronists facing off ever since over who said what to whom.

In addition to providing a compelling view of historical change among individ-

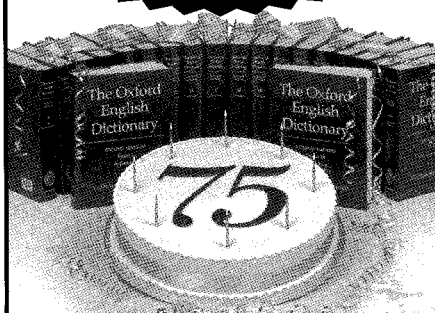


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uals, Stendhal's novels are stylistically so seductive that they have tempted a wide range of translators to undertake versions in English. There is certainly something English about his prose: he was one of those French writers of the period who saw in the virtues of English a means of combating the strictness of classical French style. Among his early projects was an idea for a Smollett-like *Life and Sentiments of Silencious Harry*, along with the inevitable Shakespeare-like dramas. But he has proved difficult to translate, and I know of no entirely satisfactory English translation of *Le Rouge et le Noir*. His brisk directness tends to become inelegant lumpiness; his brilliantly varied and natural dialogue is easily reduced to a steady formal tone. He was not the most fastidious of prose stylists; as he wrote in one of his aides-memoire to *Lucien Leuwen*, "One must sacrifice graceful elaboration to vigor of style." There is a lot in his best books that, like Balzac's writing, can survive even the roughest recasting, but he presents a considerable challenge to the ambitious translator.

Burton Raffel has produced a generally accurate but, I think, coarse and inappropriate translation of *Le Rouge et le Noir*. To this English reader, his frequent use of specifically American idioms is startling. It is peculiar, in a work so much about nineteenth-century European snobbery and social constraint, to come across the term "high school"; to hear casual dialogue like "Sure, he looked at you" and "Oh, fine"; to find nouns like "hick" and "bumpkin" and "high society." There is no particular reason to think that idioms current elsewhere in the English-speaking world would be more appropriate, but Raffel's choices are so clearly rooted in a more democratic viewpoint that one of the subtle effects of the novel is lost. To have socially unequal characters say, "Sure, he looked at you," is to introduce an alien note of breezy democracy to Stendhal's agonizingly stratified world.

Overall, Raffel appears to be not quite at home in Stendhal's world. Instead of using common and suitable idioms, he often resorts to peculiar inventions of his own: "Monsieur Valenod,

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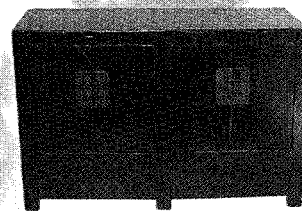
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Stanford Center on Adolescence,
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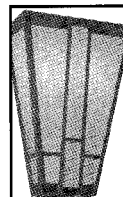
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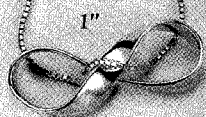
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when he met Monsieur de Rênal, *cut him cold*" (for "cut him dead"); and, five lines later, "Monsieur Valenod was what's called, three hundred miles from Paris, a *slick operator*" (for, no doubt, "cool customer"). Occasionally he just doesn't know something factual and hasn't troubled to inquire. For example, he has one character, Signor Céronimo, say, "I used to go to the little theater at San Carlino," as if San Carlino were a town; it is, in fact, the smaller of the Naples opera houses. In a social context the address "M. le Maire" is translated as "His Honor the Mayor," which is actually reserved for formal occasions. These might seem snobbish objections, and probably they are. But in a book that is to an excruciating degree about social distinctions, it doesn't do to be free and easy with the finer points.

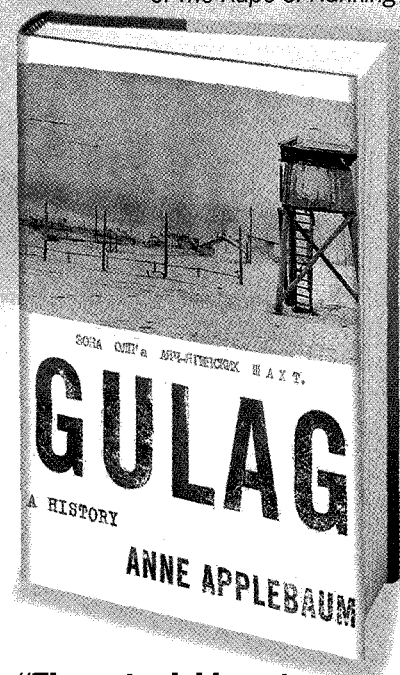
Even when there is nothing obviously wrong, Stendhal's distinctive tone is missing from Raffel's translation, and the prose is somewhat stolid. True, Raffel commits no blunder as jaw-dropping as that of a previous translator, Margaret Shaw, who ruthlessly reduced Stendhal's exactly tentative first sentence, "*La petite ville de Verrières peut passer pour l'une des plus jolies de la Franche-Comté*" ("The small town of Verrières could be considered one of the prettiest of Franche-Comté"), to "The little town of Verrières is one of the prettiest in Franche-Comté." However, numerous slips, expansions, and lazy vaguenesses have a cumulative effect. The worst of these is at the end, where "*elle mourut en embrassant ses enfants*" ("kissing her children, she died") is translated as "she died while hugging her children"—wrong register and, to my ears, peculiarly abrupt.

Stendhal continues to tempt translators, although his density, subtlety, and disconcerting streak of vulgarity will keep him a special taste among readers. Even in an unconvincing translation like this one some of his quality is visible. But a writer devoted to the specific realities of his time and place, and sensitive to social and psychological nuance, deserves not to be brazenly transposed into the language and style of a civilization so remote from his own. **A**

Philip Hensher's most recent novel, *The Mulberry Empire*, was published in the United States last year.

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INNOCENT BYSTANDER

MOVING ON, AND ON

From the Transition Index to the Rapture Index

BY CULLEN MURPHY

.....

Early in the spring, during a period when the war news from Iraq was still in its round-the-clock phase on many broadcast outlets, I listened to a radio commentary about the prospective entry of coalition forces into Baghdad. Anticipating the replacement of one regime by another, the reporter observed that the “transition process” was about to begin.

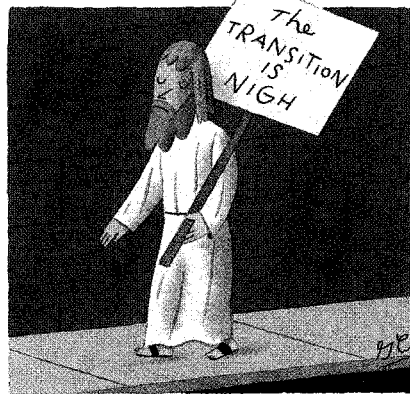
“Transition process”? The terminology was surprisingly anodyne. I certainly remember the peaceful transition of power from the Clinton Administration to the Bush Administration, and the youthful hijinks of Clinton loyalists who removed the *W* keys from their computers as they left the White House. In Iraq, of course, the transition has involved using precision-guided weapons to remove key ministries from entire city blocks, plus weeks of ground fighting. The General Accounting Office criticized departing Clinton officials for “damage, theft, vandalism and pranks” inflicted on government infrastructure, and estimated the cost at more than \$13,000; one wonders what the GAO might have to say about the transfer of power in Baghdad.

The idea that “transition process” might be a synonym for “forcible overthrow” in Iraq makes one wonder if it would also suit other pivotal moments. Historians have long put a negative spin on the barbarian visitation of A.D. 410, which they call the Sack of Rome. Edward Gibbon described the scene.

At the hour of midnight the Salarian gate was silently opened, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred and sixty-

three years after the foundation of Rome, the Imperial city, which had subdued and civilised so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia.

But maybe “Sack of Rome” is too melodramatic; maybe “transition process” is what we’re looking for. The term could usefully substitute for numerous instances of pejorative shorthand—the Black Death, the Inquisition, the Terror,



the Great Purge. Adolf Hitler’s mad embrace of personal and national annihilation in the closing days of World War II has been likened to the Wagnerian spectacle of *Götterdämmerung*—the destruction of Valhalla and the death of the gods. Do we have it all wrong? Should the last opera of the Ring Cycle have been called *Der Übergangsprozess*? Was Victory in Europe Day really Transition in Europe Day?

Keep an eye out for “transition” and its relatives. As linguistic tics they constitute an invasive species, colonizing every available niche—a consequence,

perhaps, of the spread of evolutionary thinking to every corner of the popular mind. If change is constant and mutation unavoidable, and if all social and physical processes are interrelated, then transition becomes the basic dynamic behind almost everything. Moments of radical discontinuity—pestilence, upheaval, death—were once taken for granted as an element of the human condition. The new perspective allows us to see all events, no matter how surprising or calamitous, as part of the seamless workings of an indifferent universe.

Tracking the usage frequency of “transition” and its cognates—creating a Transition Index, as it were—would yield an accurate picture of social and personal flux at any given moment. It used to be that people simply lost their jobs. Now they are said to be transitioning. I’ve seen the word “transitioning” applied to people undergoing sex-change procedures, people undergoing plastic surgery, women entering menopause, couples embarking on divorce, patients starting to take powerful drugs, addicts ceasing to take powerful drugs, prisoners getting out of jail, Catholic clerics trying to become Episcopal clerics, and entire church congregations attempting to alter their style of worship. Judging from a newspaper article about a minister who works in a hospice facility, people no longer shuffle off this mortal coil: “As chaplain, he daily grapples with the heavyweight issues of life, death and dying, helping others who are living on the edge—transitioning between this life and the next.” A manual concerning mail-order brides from the Philippines and their adjustment to life in the United States is titled “Transitioning from Filipina to Filipino-American.” The manual was written by an American husband for the benefit of other husbands, and contains advice like this:

GREG CLARKE

Food. The idea that certain foods are for breakfast, some for lunch, and some for dinner might be alien to some Filipinas, and you might need to explain what foods are generally acceptable for different meals (i.e., no hot dogs for breakfast, no bagels for suppers, etc ... unless you're a college student).

Transitioning is made flesh in the form of "transitional figures," an increasingly prevalent archetype. Transitional figures come in two main varieties—the historical footnote and the historical facilitator. Newt Gingrich became a self-proclaimed example of the latter: he saw "transitional figure" as a harbinger of greatness and prematurely applied it to himself as speaker of the House. Historical footnotes are people like the Soviet leaders Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, both of whom were seen as transitional figures from the moment of their elevation; they were expected to do little more than mark time on a narrow isthmus between two vast national destinies. Pope John Paul I, the so-called "smiling Pope," was elected almost with the proviso that he be a transitional figure; he fulfilled his mandate, dying after only a month in office. Shortly after the 1996 presidential campaign Bill Clinton was reported to feel that his record thus far had made him merely a transitional figure, not the "transformational leader" (like Teddy Roosevelt) that he hoped to become. Neanderthal Man, were he alive today, would in all likelihood be called a transitional figure, rather than the more judgmental, and perhaps politically incorrect, "evolutionary dead end" that he actually represents.

The main characteristic of "transition process" is its neutrality: it doesn't presume to discern a moral vector but merely makes note of an altered state. That same neutral quality animates its close cousin, "moving on," which blends elements of "changing the subject," "hitting the road," and "turning over a new leaf" into one all-purpose locution.

Jane Fonda, announcing that her marriage to Ted Turner had entered a transition process, said in a prepared statement, "We shared ten years together, and I will always care for him. Now

it's time to move on." As the impeachment proceedings against Bill Clinton edged toward finality, the Senate minority leader, Tom Daschle, declared, "For the good of the country, and in keeping with the Constitution, it is now time to end this trial. It is time to move on." Picking up the theme, People for the American Way sponsored a nationwide pro-Clinton advertising campaign built around the explicit message "Let's Move On." To be sure, the political left has no monopoly on this phrase. Senator Trent Lott got himself into trouble late last year for suggesting that America would have been a better place if the segregationist Strom Thurmond had been elected President in 1948. As the controversy persisted, a spokesman for Lott told reporters, "We believe it's time to move on and do the work of the American people." The conservative activist Grover Norquist has launched a campaign to replace the image of Alexander Hamilton on the ten-dollar bill with an image of Ronald Reagan. "Hamilton was a great American," Norquist explains, "but it's time to move on."

Of course, there is a very old sense in which all of Creation may be ready to move on, transitioning to the Rapture and from there to the Great Tribulation. These are stages of the period known as the End Times, associated with the Second Coming. The Internet these days is filled with religious speculation on the subject, much of it involving recent events in Iraq. The biblical book of Revelation's feverish End Times prophecy mentions the Euphrates River, a conflict involving Babylon (which lies south of modern Baghdad), and the coming of someone called The Destroyer (which the name Saddam can be interpreted to mean). A Dow Jones-style online metric called the Rapture Index now monitors the prevalence of forty-five end-of-the-world indicators (earthquakes, famine, wild weather, false Christs) as prophesied in the Bible.

This is not exactly the transition process that the radio reporter I heard had in mind, but it is worth noting that as I write, the Rapture Index stands at 173, up from 57 in 1993. ▀

Cullen Murphy is The Atlantic's managing editor.



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A commencement address

BY WILLIAM HAMILTON

.....

Ladies, women, girls, females, males, men, and gentlemen; neuters, trans-genders, and teachers; administrators, boyfriends, relatives, and impoverished parents: it is my purpose and honor here today to remind you as graphically and personally as I can just how vital and huge and traditional an ingredient boredom is in Western education. Because it was such a memorable presence in the classrooms, the study halls, and even the dormitory rooms you graduates are leaving behind forever today, it is my ceremonial duty to remind you of its enormous power and stultifying dignity. Boredom is the marble from which great and stately occasions like today's are built. So let us together gather here all the boredom we can. Get into it.

Really feel the boredom. Go ahead and twitch. Check your watches. Wish you were elsewhere and worry that this speech will never end and will never get to the point. I know I do.

The late, great Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges wrote a story about a page in a particular strange old book on which the print never reached that final corner signaling that it was time to turn it. A page that never ended. Critics, English departments, and other literary officials seem to think that this story was an effort at fantasy—a clever fable from a surrealist's hand. But I remember encountering many, many pages exactly like that during my education. I remember books in which I looked at every word in order from left

to right, eyeballs descending stripe of words by stripe of words all the way down to the bottom of the page—and comprehended nothing. Got nowhere. Despite all that eyeballing, I would find myself no further along with the wisdom offered than if the page had been Borges's endless one. I might as well have been reading snow.

Studying such pages often ends with a bang. You do not even realize you have drifted off into a pleasant slumber until that book in your hands suddenly slams face-down onto the floor. Everybody nearby looks up at you from books and note-taking. You blink and smile and reach down to pick up the fallen book as though the crash was not your fault. An accident. Some passing clumsy force knocked it from your hands—just as you were making some real intellectual breakthroughs. Refreshed by your nap and embarrassed by the rush of sudden attention brought your way, you are now perhaps ready to try studying again, this time with some real resolve.

But eventually on this second attempt you realize that you are once again only going through the motions, performing a sort of karaoke of studying. Look at your watch. Nearly two hours have gone by since you seated yourself in the library and opened Sir Thomas Browne's seventeenth-century prose masterpiece, *Urn Burial*. And where are you? Well, you are on page 34. But, unfortunately, you just exercised the thirty-three preceding pages with your fingers. Your eyes may have been open, but they were as sightless as buttons. All those information-bearing words in this antique of rare and fine very early English prose passed you by like strangers on a busy street. You must start all over again on this vital and important reading assignment.

And this time you really must, and therefore will, concentrate. Your chances of getting ahead depend on it. A good grade in this class will, of course, automatically make the rest of your life rich and impressive and easy, so fifty pages of attentive reading ought not to be impossible. Wouldn't you like to win the respect of your friends and acquaintances, blow the minds of your enemies,

JASON SCHNEIDER

NPG Statement on Population

We Believe that the Optimum Rate of Population Growth is Negative

We believe that the optimum **rate** of population growth for the United States (and for the world) is **negative** until such time as the **scale** of economic activity, and its environmental effects, is reduced to a level that would be sustainable indefinitely.

We are convinced that if present rates of population and economic growth were allowed to continue, the end result, within the lifetimes of many of us, would inevitably be near universal poverty in a hopelessly polluted nation and world.

We agree with Professor Herman Daly who has pointed out that the human economy is a subset of the biosphere, and that **the current scale of economic activity relative to the biosphere is already far too large to be sustainable indefinitely.**

Stabilization Is Not Enough

We believe that calls for merely slowing down rapid population growth, or for stabilizing population at present or even higher levels, **are totally inadequate.**

Such proposals, while presented as a solution, **fail to address the central issue:** how to create a national (and world) economy that will be sustainable indefinitely.

At present or at even higher levels of population, neither the application of science and technology, nor simplifying life styles, nor any combination of the two, can offer any hope of reducing our impact on the environment to a sustainable level.

We Need a Smaller Population

We recognize that our impact on the environment in terms of pollution and resource depletion is the product of our numbers times our per capita consumption of energy and materials. Thus, there are only three ways by which that impact can be reduced:

- By reducing the size of our population by a negative rate of population growth.
- By reducing overconsumption (in the United States and other developed countries) by simplifying lifestyles.
- By reducing resource depletion and pollution per unit of consumption through more efficient use of energy and materials.

Population size is by far the most critical of those three variables. **Nevertheless, our present scale of economic activity is so large relative to the biosphere that all three measures are needed in order to reduce it to a sustainable level.**

An Urgent Need

Over 30 years ago, when our U.S. population was far smaller (about 202 million, rather than our present 288 million) Professor John Holdren correctly saw the urgent need for a negative rate of population growth. At that time he wrote, "... What is surprising... is that there is not more agreement concerning what the rate of change of population size should be. For given the uncertain, but possibly grave, risks associated with substantially increasing our impact on the environment, and given that population growth aggravates or impedes the solution of a wide variety of other problems... it should be obvious that the optimum rate of population growth is zero or negative until such time as the uncertainties have been removed and the problems solved."

A Population Goal for Our Country

We must have, first of all, a nationally determined population goal for our country, accompanied by effective policies to achieve it.

We urge Congress and President Bush to set, as a top priority national goal, **the achievement of a negative rate of population growth for the United States until such time as the scale of our economic activity is reduced to a sustainable level.**

We also call on our political leaders to urge other nations to pursue a similar goal.

It would be relatively easy for the U.S. to achieve a negative rate of population growth. But to do so we must first be willing to address the two factors that cause our present growth; fertility and immigration.

If almost all couples had no more than two children, and if we reduced immigration to not over 100,000 a year, our population would soon stop growing and then begin a gradual decline before stabilizing by the end of this century at a sustainable level of not over 150 million.

By contrast, we are now heading rapidly toward disaster. Our population growth is destroying us. If present rates of fertility and immigration were to continue, our U.S. population would grow to 500 million or more by the end of the next century.

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triple your parents' love for you, and instantly make up for all your failures and shortcomings? Unpiling less than a half inch of these pages after reading the words on them is all you must do. So will you please just forget about yourself for a little while and read this book here in your hands? Books are the bricks of the educational structure. This is one. Feel it. Shake it. See? It is not an accessory, not a toy. It is not a Prada handbag or a Frisbee. It is a book, a page sandwich that you must consume or die.

The first sentence is familiar. Remember? You have actually read it, or some of it, twice now, so you are really getting to know it. From that capital letter heading it up with so much pride and pageantry almost clear through to the humble little period finishing it off, this first sentence is getting to be as familiar as a pet. Not even the Old English prose can put you off this time, throw you back into that slough of boredom and inattention that knocked you unconscious a little while ago. Well, no wonder it did. This writing is as crude as a cudgel. As medieval as stones. It is very early English prose. Stonehenge stuff. *Lord of the Rings*.

English guys' hair seems to cut differently from American guys' hair. The English guys have it long in a different place or something—bowed up in front like a croquet hoop. They are very good with hedges in England too. Maybe cutting their famous topiary gardens taught the English some secret, guild-protected tricks that they employ in their barbershops. But the English are an uncertain people now, always asking your opinion or for your approval. Every sentence they utter ends with a request for a little pat on the back: "Lovely day, don't you think?" "He's a right bastard, isn't he?" It's as if English people need constant reassurance. They must have lost some national confidence when they lost all those colonies. By the way, are you here in the library to think about the living English or to read the ancient wisdom that one of their writers left to civilization? What was his name? You don't even remember it! That's how well you are doing. Better check the cover. *Urn Burial*, by Sir Thomas Browne. Of course. What a depressing title. But

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Jack Hannah in *You Will Not Taste Death: Jesus and Epicureanism* recognizes the notes as chronologically ordered and correlative with the skeletal history used in the *Gospel of Mark*. Hannah provides all the text of *Thomas* and all Marcan context, and upon this develops a narrative about Jesus that is tenably historical.

This *historical* Jesus based his teaching on the Epicurean philosophy; e.g. in place of Judaism's practices of fasting, praying, almsgiving, and obeying food laws, this *historical* Jesus said, "Tell no lie and do not do what you hate."

This *historical* Jesus never mentioned devil, demons, or hell. And the most radical influence of Epicureanism on Jesus' thought was that God and Caesar are man-made authorities and that one's ultimate authority should be oneself.

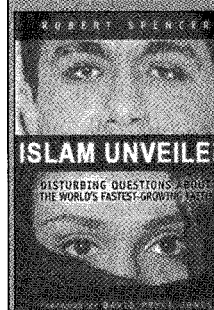
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it might make a good name for a band—Urn Burial. Excuse me, please? Will you get back to reading the book?

Now something very weird is going on down there on the old page—kind of a hallucination. The paper itself, the white part of the page, has somehow captured more of your interest than the crawly little black words. Good Lord. The white has begun to move, to descend through the clusters of letters, those inky impediments, like drops of rain running down the window of a stalled train. The writing just sort of hovers in meaningless clogs and clumps as the magnificent white field gathers momentum and streams majestically by beneath. Does it remind you of skiing? Whiteface? Aspen? Austria? Wouldn't it be fantastic to ski Austria? Snowboarding! The insane confidence of downhill racers! They must think their bones are made of spring steel! Meeting people on the lifts. Roaring fire in the lodge. Good God. Do you call this reading? Or read-boarding—careening down the pages in a blank blur? All of us who have ever gotten to this streaming-white-page stage of study boredom know that in his story of an endless page Jorge Luis Borges was only describing what many of us call homework.

I knew Jorge Luis Borges—not as well as I might have liked, but at least well enough to have his great and academically significant name to drop here today. Our acquaintance was confined to an elevator ride, which, because he was not only famous but also blind, I probably remember a little more vividly than he did. It was in New York's Hilton Hotel. I had just been to see my Hong Kong shirtmaker, Mr. Takly. If you think you are bored here today, listening to a meandering and pointless commencement address, think for a moment about how bored touring Hong Kong shirtmakers can get. Mr. Takly was on the last leg of a six-month, fifty-city tour of hotel rooms in which he laid out all his shirt samples on one bed and sat on the other one watching cartoons on TV while he waited for customers—customers whose language he did not really even speak beyond a vocabulary of cuffs and collars and fabrics. When I

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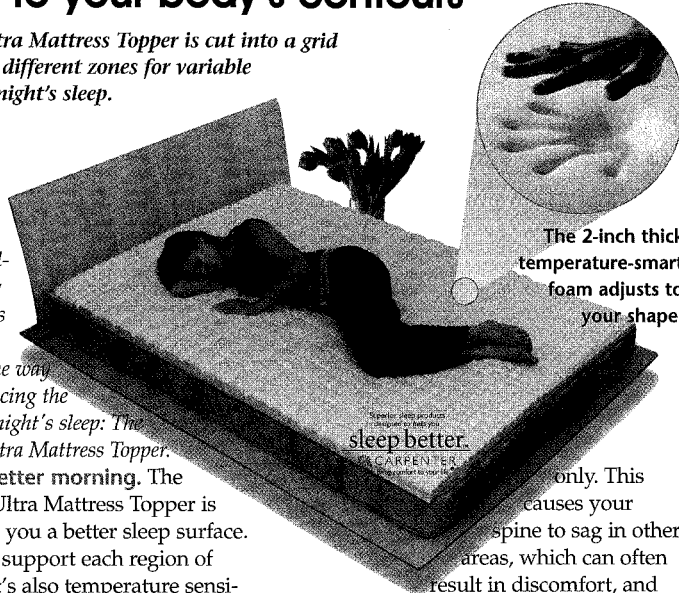
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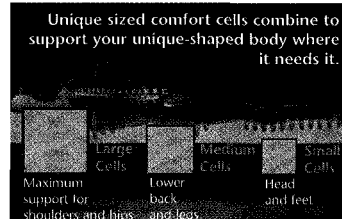
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saw him, he was not as fresh as he must have been at the beginning of his trip. He was lonely. It was soon poignantly obvious to me that Mr. Takly desperately wanted to talk to another human being about something besides shirts. Maddened by isolation and boredom, jumpy from *Road Runner* reruns, the exhausted traveling salesman could do no better in the way of communication in English about matters other than cottons and collars than to finally cry out, "Everything crazy!"

At which I nodded in agreement. So he said it again. And I nodded again. We tried it one more time. I decided that a fourth exchange wouldn't deepen our mutual understanding of the world situation, so I concluded my business and got out of there.

The next thing I knew, elevator doors were sliding open to reveal Jorge Luis Borges. I was stepping from a surrealistic scene into the presence of a surrealist. Should I speak to him? Tell him about Takly? In English or Spanish? Borges was gripping a tall, spindle-turned, silver-topped cane or staff. His hair was as white as a page, and his remarkable, blind eyes were on me. He seemed impressed by my height, scoping me up and down. Next to him stood a beautiful young woman whom I took to be charged with guiding the old genius around town. From the way his big, cataract-glazed, sort of fried-egg-looking eyes were running over me, I guessed or maybe imagined that he could see at least a little bit. The intense, gorgeous brunette at his side seemed to sense that I had recognized him. She smiled and nodded encouragement: *Go ahead, say hello to Jorge Luis Borges.*

Besides the three of us there were three American salesmen, wearing nametags on their suits, who sounded more like they were communicating over two-way radios than directly talking to each other. Like Mission Control and *Apollo*:

"Three-oh-three out of Akron pretty full?"

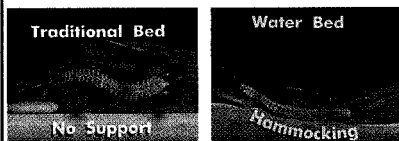
"You got that right."

"Goin' good?"

"Can't complain."

The floors were puffing by like calendar pages indicating the passage of

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time in an old movie. I was trying to think of the right thing to say. Borges was still studying my adjacent stature. The beauty was smiling and nodding at me, *Go ahead. Say something to him.* Right! Talk to Jorge Luis Borges! But what about? What should I say? Spanish? Would my Spanish be good enough?

"*Buenos días, maestro. Tanto me admiro su obra?*" Wait a minute. Is it *la obra* or *el obra*? In general, Spanish words ending in *a* are feminine, but there are exceptions—like *el día. El problema. La obra* or *el obra*? Not to mention the possibility of screwing up the verb *admirarse*, which just happens to be as reflexive as a boa constrictor. It would be particularly ludicrous to show off in poor Spanish to one of its greatest users. Say something in English? "Hello, Mr. Borges"—no, "Hello, maestro. I've just come from a surrealistic scene that might amuse you. My shirtmaker ..." It really might amuse him. I could describe Mr. Takly on his shirtmaker's honeymoon in fifty hotels—Takly on one bed and his bride, in the form of a thousand swatches of shirting, on the other. The image might appeal to Borges. It would certainly be too demanding a story for my Spanish.

Wait a minute! I admonished myself. *Borges is famously fluent in English!* Learned it as a child. Writes in it. Okay, say whatever you are going to say in English. Maybe, in honor of his nationality, throw in a little Spanish for seasoning: "Mr. Borges, what an honor it is to find myself descending with you in this elevator. *Descendiendo. Un poco como Dante a los infiernos—¿no es verdad?*" No, that sounded ridiculous. *Muy pretencioso.* Well, what should I say?

Perhaps he would be amused to learn that I was a cartoonist. Or, reminding myself that he was blind, I reckoned perhaps not. My favorite of his stories was the macabre one about two men with neighboring plots of land who developed a hatred for each other. They tormented each other in myriad ways until they found themselves conscripted together in a Uruguayan revolution. The Whites against the Reds. They were Whites. Fought side by side for two years, only to be captured by a sadistic officer of the Reds from the same home town who remembered their



MEET THE AUTHORS

★

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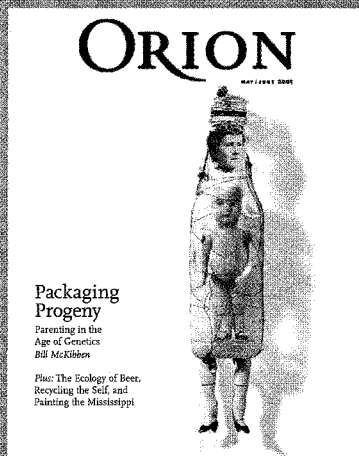
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notorious enmity and staged a foot race for them to see who could run the farthest after having their throats slit. Or should I mention how much I had enjoyed his famous bestiary of fantastic chimeras? Or just get right into a literary discussion?

“Maestro. What an honor. By any chance was Sir Thomas Browne’s *Urn Burial* the inspiration for your story about an endless page?”

It might be the beginning of an important friendship. But just then, just as I was finally about to say something, the damn elevator doors opened. The ride was over. The astronaut-sounding salesmen were getting off. Jorge Luis Borges and his beautiful assistant were suddenly washing away before my eyes—passing downstream into time and space. Before they entirely and forever disappeared, she threw me an unforgettable disappointed glance. Oh, heartbreak. I can still see it.

Traditionally, like triumphal arches, the pyramids of Egypt, and all those books full of wisdom lining the walls of your school’s great library, commencement addresses should loom and warn as well as bore you. Commencement addresses are for the grave and mighty duties of farewell. Your years of education are now over, almost a memory already, even though you are still here. I hope you will remember the time as wonderful and boring and a failure and a success—a time when you could have and should have done a little better, if only you had the perspective you get afterward, when it’s too late.

I never did actually read *Urn Burial*, by Sir Thomas Browne. But if I had, I might not remember it as vividly as I remember not reading it. As for Borges—well, graduates, as you ride life’s elevators, don’t overthink your options. All you really have to say when you find yourself being looked up and down by a blind world figure with a beautiful assistant is something simple and obvious, such as “Did you ever get a Nobel Prize? You certainly should have, *éno es verdad?*” Or even a friendly “*¿Qué tal?*”

Thank you. ▀

William Hamilton draws cartoons for The New Yorker and The New York Observer. He has written five plays and four novels.

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A NEW CHESTNUT

The work of a dedicated few may eventually restore America's blighted chestnut forests to their former vastness. One happy consequence can already be tasted

BY CORBY KUMMER

.....

This month hundreds of volunteers along the Appalachian Trail will trade excited e-mails detailing when they plan to pollinate their chestnut trees with special pollen—one more step in a twenty-year effort to restore the American chestnut to its majestic place in the northeastern and mid-Atlantic forest. Until a century ago billions of American chestnuts came into flower before the start of July, making the hillsides they favor look buried in snow. As tall as the tallest oak, with a diameter of up to ten feet in a clear field, the chestnut made up fully a quarter of the forests in its native range, from southern Canada to Georgia.

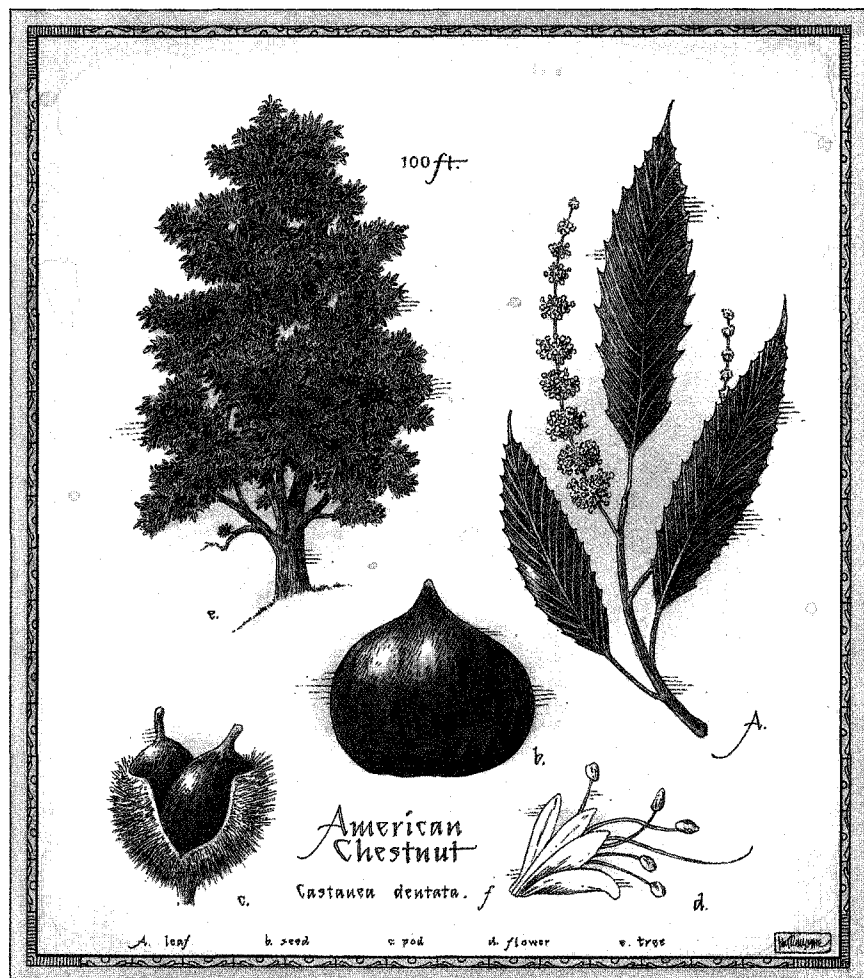
In America as in Europe, the chestnut was the “bread tree,” providing a staple that could be boiled and mashed to replace potato as a starch, ground into flour to make noodles or bread (a favorite use of the Cherokee, who made chestnut cornbread), or eaten out of hand, either raw or roasted, for a nutritious, filling snack. In October the vast stands provided an almost limitless supply of free food, dropping nuts that glistened like gemstones and fed not only people but also wild turkeys, pigs (whose ham made Virginia famous), and other animals that were themselves important foods. Chestnuts, easy to dry, gave Appalachian families a source of income and a way to survive the winter.

Creamy, slightly crunchy, delicately sweet without seeming starchy or bland, fresh American chestnuts taste almost like fresh water chestnuts, to which they aren't related. This was one of several revelations I had recently when I tasted “Americanoid” chestnuts, as the enthusiastic grower calls his hybrid American-Asian nuts—an advance sample of what all those volunteers are working toward (and available to anyone by phone or Internet order). Often no bigger than large marbles, American

chestnuts have a relatively high ratio of surface area to volume, which enables them to convert starch to sugar faster than do the European and Asian chestnuts we are used to—chestnuts that have been bred to be big. American chestnuts are intensely flavored nuggets by comparison.

it is now easy to pair chestnuts, fresh or dried, with the many things they nicely complement, including roasted root vegetables, seafood soups, and—now in season where chestnut trees once reigned—asparagus.

This is an auspicious moment to become familiar with the virtues of the American chestnut. The goal of reviving the tree is coming into view faster than anyone expected twenty years ago, when a few researchers adopted a new approach to reversing one of the great environmental tragedies in American history. In 1904 a fungus was discovered on a chestnut at the New York Zoological Park: Asian chestnuts, which



Other revelations: American chestnuts have far softer shells (which are easy to cut or bite through) and are miraculously free of the bitter skin that stubbornly clings to more familiar chestnuts. Cut in half and cooked for a few minutes in a microwave oven, they practically leap out of their shells. Thus

brought the blight, were resistant, American not. The blight caused by the fungus moved through forests at up to fifty miles a year. Lumber companies, shortsightedly assuming that death was inevitable, began clear-cutting chestnut forests, selling the valuable timber—light, rot-resistant, easy to

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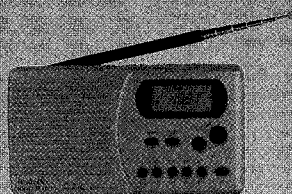
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N	S	S	A	G	A	L	S	T	U	R
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N	U	R	S	E	S	E	D	A	N	S

"Treasure Island"

Extra clue: Ring inside rough cache = H(O)ARD.

Across: 1. SABOT (anag.) 2. S + ATE + D 3. S(PR)EE 4. P + ONE 5. P + OINTE (toe in anag.) 6. C(R)OONS 7. SA + GAL (arrev.) 8. S(T)URCEONS 9. H(EIGHT)ENS 10. AN(ALY)TIC (lay anag.) 11. RE(D)TAIL 12. MIN(ARE)T 13. GRI(O)T 14. SIENA (anag.) 15. SOAR (homophone) 16. DEMOTION (anag.) 17. NURSE (anag.) 18. S(ED)ANS Down: 1. SPONCE (anag.) 2. T(IT)AN 3. ARISEN (anag.) 4. RUBENS (homophone) 5. OS + CAR 6. OR(G)AN 7. ARRESTING (a wresting homophone) 8. SE(V)EN 9. MESETA (hidden) 10. TA(C)OS 11. A + PEL(ET) 12. GATE (homophone) 13. TOCSIN (homophone) 14. ACC(ID)ENT 15. AI(RHEA)D 16. ELL + IS + ON 17. SP(ORT)Y 18. MOO + N + S

work, handsome in paneling and furniture—for railroad ties and telephone poles. Many of the fences built along the Appalachian Trail under the Work Projects Administration were of chestnut; they guide hikers to this day. Any natural resistance the forests may have harbored was lost in the clear-cutting. By 1950 nine million acres that had been covered with American chestnuts were covered with gray stumps. Wildlife populations plummeted, and along with them the food they had provided. (Horse chestnuts, being another species entirely, were immune from the blight. Their shiny nuts encased in spiky burrs resemble true chestnuts, but the nuts, called "buckeyes" in America and "conkers" in England, contain bitter tannins and sufficient acetone to make them potentially toxic.) A free subsistence crop disappeared from Appalachia, where poverty had long been another blight.

The revival of the American chestnut could catalyze the first large-scale success in restoration ecology, which aims to bring entire ecosystems to working health. This branch of ecology, still young, differs from movements such as permaculture, which encourages people to devise strategies to make healthy ecosystems flourish and endure. (Like sustainable agriculture, with which it overlaps, permaculture looks for ways to let people live off the land without fundamentally altering it.) Restoration ecologists have looked to ruined ecosystems such as strip-mined land and watersheds wrecked by logging—challenges requiring help from governments and landowners, who usually don't want to give it. Restoring the chestnut forest is a more straightforward goal.

The chestnut was the challenge facing early-twentieth-century American botanists. For decades, however, chestnut blight, which kills by girdling the tree with cankers that work inward and choke off its food supply, resisted all attempts to keep it in check or circumvent it. Because the fungus that causes it lives in the bark of other trees, such as oak and ash, without killing them, the blight still thrives in the chestnut's orig-

inal range, killing off chestnut seedlings as they reach maturity. (Blight doesn't affect the root system; seedlings grow on stumps, sometimes for several years, before blight fells them.) Researchers crossed the blight-resistant Asian chestnut trees with American chestnuts and then, in classic fashion, crossed resulting generations, too, with Asian chestnuts, in order to introduce as many Asian genes as possible; no one knew which genes or how many conferred resistance. The work was terribly slow: it takes three to five years to prove that a cross is blight resistant. The crosses seemed certain to look like Asian trees, which are far shorter than the American species and shaped differently. And every cross failed. The intensive efforts that had begun in the 1920s petered out in the 1960s.

In the late 1970s Charles Burnham, a well-known plant geneticist, offered fresh hope. He hypothesized that blight resistance could be conferred by crossing American-Asian hybrids in the opposite direction—to American rather than Asian chestnuts, continually diluting out most Asian genes except those few that carried blight resistance. Burnham began working to create a blight-resistant tree that would preserve many more American characteristics, collaborating with Philip Rutter, a biologist and ecologist who was already trying similar breeding experiments.

The goal suddenly seemed decades, not centuries, away. The federal government had ended the chestnut program it had sponsored since the 1930s, so a group of independent researchers who had been seized by the chestnut dream formed the American Chestnut Foundation in 1983, with the grandiose aim of repopulating the Appalachians with American chestnuts. The smaller nuts of a true American chestnut, or something as close to it as possible, might not bring as high a price as the Asian chestnuts under commercial cultivation in California—but the benefits to wildlife populations would be incalculable. The oaks that took the place of chestnuts in many areas produce acorns irregularly, whereas chestnuts drop huge crops of easy-to-eat nuts year after year. The forests would

benefit too. Rutter, who served as the foundation's president for ten years, estimates that a forest dominated by chestnut trees grows 30 percent faster than one dominated by oaks; the hyperactive chestnut produces sugar from sunlight all winter, staying bright green beneath its thin bark year-round. Also, the chestnut is a gorgeous tree.

From the beginning, volunteers, some with memories of the terrible blight, many others with only ideals and horticultural curiosity, supported the foundation—less with money (funding has always been minimal) than with planting and reporting. While the foundation tries to develop a resistant American chestnut that is just one-sixteenth Asian, volunteers in more than twelve states pollinate surviving American chestnut seedlings with pollen sent by Federal Express from the main farms, in Meadowview, Virginia. When the foundation distributes seedlings of the final hybrid, volunteers will cross them with pollen from the trees they have bred over the years, helping ensure local hardiness. The volunteers' guru is Fred Hebard, one of the foundation's few employees, a quiet and very tenacious plant pathologist who has devoted his whole career to the American chestnut.

Rutter is now a chestnut and hazelnut breeder and grower in Canton, Minnesota. It was his Badgersett Farms that shipped me those Americanoid chestnuts, which come from trees that are about 60 percent American. Badgersett sells fresh chestnuts for months after the harvest (the key to successful long storage, Rutter says, is very cold refrigeration).

Thanks to the work of volunteers, and thanks to techniques developed at Meadowview to speed testing, last spring Hebard planted the seeds of what he hopes will be his final-generation, fifteen-sixteenths American chestnut. Next year he will have the results of the first resistance tests. If they are good, he will begin the last years of testing, with the goal of supplying thousands of seeds and seedlings to volunteers up and down the country, who will plant starter groves. The volunteers will be "setting the species free again," Rutter says. "It can do the rest itself."



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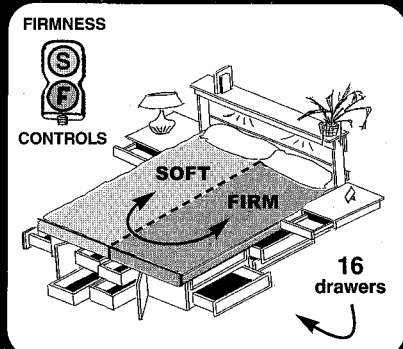
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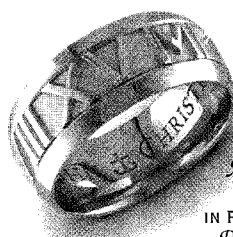
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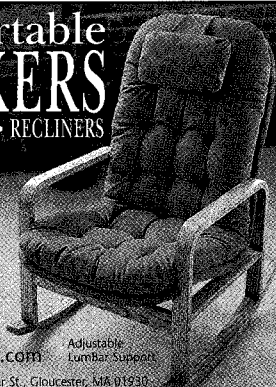
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I had always assumed that the roasted chestnuts that appeared at our family dinners in October and November were nostalgic reminders of the Connecticut woods of my parents' childhood. My father recently corrected me. Chestnuts had long been gone from my parents' Connecticut; he and my mother knew them from the streets of New York. The Italian vendors who roasted chestnuts and scooped them into thick paper cones probably used the same kind my mother found at the supermarket (if a better grade)—Italian imports. Ill-advised long storage at room temperature guaranteed a high percentage of dried-out or moldy nuts, which also form part of my childhood memories—along with thumbs and forefingers burnt and blackened from impatient peeling.

The trials of cooking imported chestnuts, and also their brief and chancy seasonal availability, have limited their place in American cuisine. Other than in stuffing, their best-known use is as the sugar to make the medicine of brussels sprouts go down. If chestnuts can make brussels sprouts taste good, imagine what they can do for vegetables people actually enjoy. Roasted and chopped, chestnuts make a particularly good garnish for whole asparagus, whose acidity and slight fibrousness is complemented by the sweet chewiness of the nuts.

A perfect early-summer supper is my favorite asparagus dish, *asparagi alla fiorentina*—nothing more than asparagus boiled and then heated in the oven with melted butter and grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, and topped with an egg fried sunny-side up. Diners break the egg yolk and let it run all over the asparagus. Chestnuts are a lovely addition; I have adapted a recipe from Nancy Harmon Jenkins's excellent *Flavors of Tuscany*. It demonstrates that sometimes nothing is better than butter—the best medium for chestnuts.

To prepare chestnuts as a garnish for the *asparagi*—and for many other kinds of vegetables or for stews—cut a dozen or so small nuts in half and microwave on a paper towel for two minutes. Let them cool a bit and remove the shells—this will be remarkably easy, and will sell you on the superiority of

American chestnuts, if the sweeter and richer flavor isn't enough. Coarsely chop the nuts and set them aside. (If you want to serve plain roasted chestnuts, toast the cooked and shelled nuts in an oven at 375° until they start to blacken at the edges—a matter of just two minutes or so.)

For six servings of asparagus and eggs as a substantial starter or a light main dish, preheat the oven to 350° and have ready a shallow oval or rectangular ovenproof dish, half a stick (four tablespoons) of butter, a quarter cup of freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, and six eggs, the freshest you can buy. Wash, trim, and peel two and a half pounds of fresh asparagus (I believe in peeling any spear that is thicker than a knitting needle). Bring unsalted water to a rolling boil, simmer the spears until they are bright green and still crunchy, about three to six minutes (the asparagus will soften as it rests and is reheated in the oven), and then drain the spears. While the asparagus cooks, heat half the butter in a small sauté pan until it foams. Pour the hot butter into the dish and arrange the asparagus over it. Season lightly with salt and pepper and scatter the cheese and chopped chestnuts on top. Heat the asparagus in the oven (but don't leave it in the oven for more than about seven minutes—long enough to melt the cheese and lightly brown but not burn the butter). Meanwhile heat a serving platter for the eggs. Melt the remaining butter in a frying pan and gently fry each egg over medium heat, basting the top with butter but letting the yolk thicken only slightly; transfer the eggs to the heated platter. Bring the asparagus and eggs to the table and let guests slide an egg on top of as much asparagus as manners permit them to take. (If you have timid guests, assemble the plates yourself.) Hot chestnuts should always inspire unmasked greed.

The American Chestnut Foundation Web site is www.acf.org; many state chapters have sites of their own, which are linked to the main site. Badgersett Farms is at www.badgersett.com.

Corby Kummer is a senior editor of *The Atlantic* and the author of *The Joy of Coffee* (1996) and *The Pleasures of Slow Food* (2002).



THE PUZZLER

by EMILY COX and HENRY RATHVON

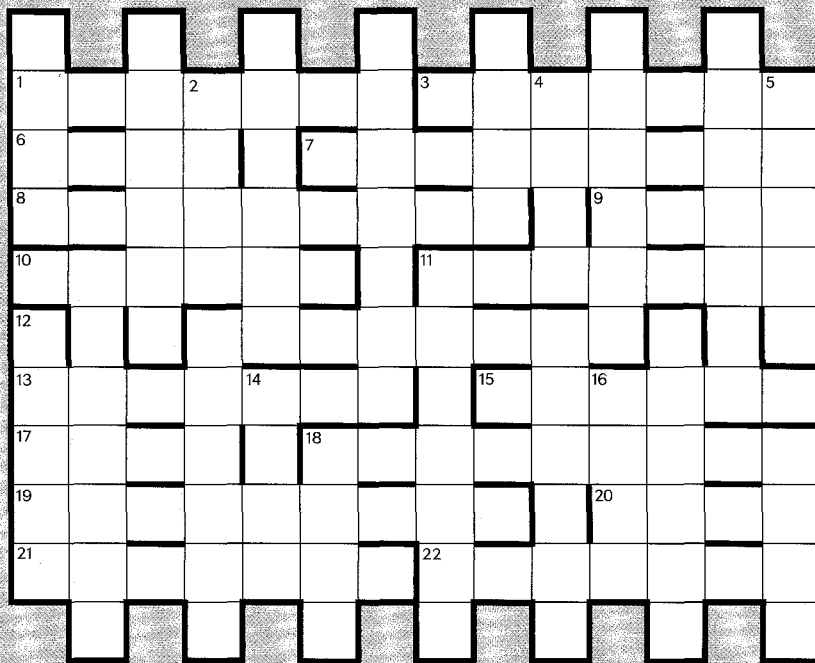
Standouts

This puzzle has some outstanding features at the top and the bottom of the grid. The fourteen vertical entries supplying the Standout letters are clued separately and in no special order. All other entries are clued normally, except for the unclued central Across entry, which will reveal the category in which the Standout features hold sway. Two clue answers are capitalized.

Last month's Puzzler solution is on page 120.

ACROSS

1. Make fresh pair of notes containing lists (7)
3. French composer taking in the Italian flop (7)
6. Deer's tenderness articulated (4)
7. Coe is less troubled with two equal legs (9)
8. Half-open volume before test, and practice using charts for exams (9)
9. Handles some rabbits (4)
10. Hired killers dropping the extremities in cement (6)
11. Informed broadcast medium about punch (7)
13. Ridicule a legislator embraced by crackpot (7)
15. Fall in fight appearance (6)
17. Pasta found in reactor zone (4)
18. Selected for duty, stuck around New England (9)
19. Officer and I wander into tangled plant growth (9)
20. Murmur going around minor Italian lake (4)
21. Get steamed about victor's initial cut (7)
22. Cell containing trace of tau particle (7)



DOWN

2. Scrap for every cat (4)
4. With interest, carefully examine symbol (4)
5. Composition for voice: "Two Letters From Santa" (5)
12. Lumps \$1,000 with long shots? (5)
14. Nothing hurt caliph (4)
16. Place accommodating Conservative party (4)

STANDOUTS

- a. Burnt veggie, by the sound of it
- b. Nick Yankee doodad
- c. Pay small reward in mail
- d. Balance area in color again

- e. Getting in a fix for complex integer
- f. Brazilian lady put on airs at first
- g. Finish call aboard train
- h. Gamblers Anonymous stories in abundance
- i. A breeze garbled a "yes"
- j. Go ape, breaking tip of enemy's extremity
- k. Hammer small shelf
- l. Repeat in Czechoslovakian
- m. Top TV drama that's back in trouble
- n. One narc employer's conviction

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving visit www.theatlantic.com/issues/puzzclue.htm or send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

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WORD COURT

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

PATRICK EDSALL, of Mountain View, California, writes, "I was told that the term *crowbar* was racist. My co-worker said it was derived from *Jim Crow*, and that the device was named as such because it was used for menial labor. He said the appropriate term is *prybar*. Any insight?"

I truly am glad there are well-meaning people who stand up against racism, but I wish they were all well informed, too. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in about 1400 the already existing word *crow*, for a bird, took on the additional meaning of an iron bar, "usually with one end slightly bent and sharpened to a beak." (Other sources say that the allusion may have been to either the bird's beak or its foot.) Shakespeare used the word *crow* in this sense—in *The Comedy of Errors*, as it happens: "Well, Ile breake in: go borrow me a *crow*." People started adding *bar* to the name of the tool in the eighteenth century.

So is racism implicit in the fact that the bird that gave the *crowbar* its name is black? No. But does the fact that the bird is black have something to do with the historically derogatory term *Jim Crow*? Yes. According to Stuart Berg Flexner's *I Hear America Talking*, "Blacks were first called *crows*" in the 1730s, and this helped inspire a minstrel named Thomas D. Rice, in 1828, to write the song "Jim Crow" (sample lyrics: "My name's Jim Crow, / Walk about, and turn about, / An' do jis so"). The song's title eventually became shorthand for an era of overt segregation.

By the way, *pry bar* (two words) is in only one of eight current dictionaries I checked for you, though the others say that *pry* alone can be used to mean "crowbar." But why not say *crowbar*?

JACK MILES, of Los Angeles, writes, "I wonder whether you share my regret that usage sanctions the lack of a hyphen between *vice* and the following

noun in such expressions as *vice chancellor*, *vice consul*, and *vice president*. Should not the absence of a hyphen be understood to make those expressions mean 'chancellor in charge of vice,' 'consul in charge of vice,' and 'president in charge of vice'? In the *American Heritage Dictionary*, *vice*, meaning 'one who acts in the place of another, deputy,' is not freestanding. When the 'deputy' meaning is given, the word properly appears in the dictionary as *vice-*. *Vice* as a freestanding word means, of course, 'an evil, degrading, or immoral practice or habit.' One does, very occasionally,



see *vice-president*, but in general *vice president* is standard. I sigh when I see it on letterheads and the like, but the cause is long lost, is it not?"

Well, yes and no. The fact that the *American Heritage Dictionary* has entries for *vice-* and *vice* just as you say suggests that there's life in the old hyphenated prefix yet. Then again, the *AHD* gives separate entries for *vice chancellor*, *vice consul*, and *vice president*, only the last of which includes a hyphenated version, as an equal variant. And then again, the *AHD* hyphenates all words derived from these titles: *vice-chancellorship*, *vice-consular*, *vice-presidential*, and so on.

Webster's New World is probably the nation's most influential dictionary,

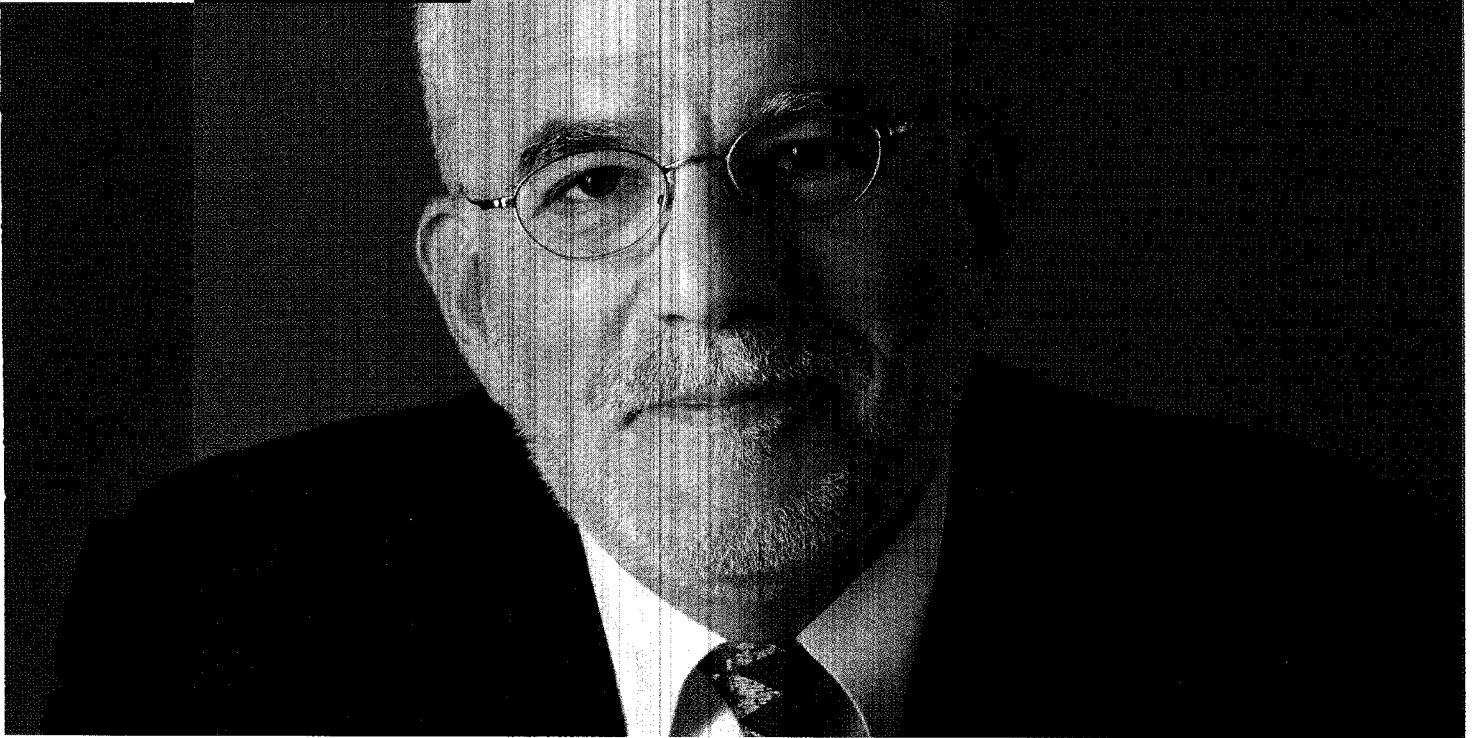
in that it's the official word source for the Associated Press and for *The New York Times*, among other newspapers. Except in reference to the Vice President of the United States (reflecting that the proper name of that office does not include a hyphen), *WNW* gives only the hyphenated version for each of the three titles we're looking into. But both the AP and the *Times* overrule the dictionary and consistently omit the hyphens.

All this adds up to those hyphens' being a matter of institutional or personal choice. Like you, if I became the vice-president of something, I'd lobby hard to be hyphenated. Why? Not because I want to differentiate myself from Dick Cheney—though I do—but to differentiate myself from the likes of the notorious Chicago gang the Vice Lords, and even from that city's vice squad, which doubtless often does battle with the gang, and vice versa.

WELLS GEMBERLING, of York, Pennsylvania, writes, "More and more I am hearing on TV legal ads about *garnish-ing* a person's wages. Does this mean they are adding a sprig of parsley? Has *garnishee* been put out to pasture?"

Garnish may sound odd when used in the sense of "to take property, usually wages, by legal authority," because the word is a great deal more common in the culinary sense: "garnish with whipped topping" and "garnish with reserved whole radish," read recent newspaper citations. All the same, according to *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage*, by Bryan A. Garner, a lawyer who is also the editor of *Black's Law Dictionary*, "the usual verb form" in the legal sense is indeed *garnish*.

Do you have a language question or dispute? Write to Word Court in care of The Atlantic Monthly, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or send e-mail to msgrammar@theatlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court. Ms. Grammar is also on the Web, at www.theatlantic.com/courtrecord.



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